Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Building the Evidence for Family Group Decision-Making in Child Welfare
HHS-2015-ACF-ACYF-CF-1008
Application Due Date: 04/24/2015

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Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

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Executive Summary

Notices:

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire funding opportunity announcement (FOA) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission.* For more information on applying for grants, please visit "How to Apply for a Grant" on the ACF Grants Page at** http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto.

The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to solicit proposals for 36-month projects that will:

- Conduct a family group decision-making (FGDM) program that effectively supports family connections and engages family members in ways that achieve positive outcomes for the target population of children who are in, or at risk of entering, foster care and their families; and
- Analyze the implementation, impact, and cost of the FGDM program through a rigorous local evaluation and cross-site evaluation participation and produce high-level evidence of what worked and why in order to contribute to the evidence base for FGDM practice.

The primary goal of these grants is to build credible evidence of effectiveness of FGDM programs in improving child welfare outcomes for the target population. Grantees will employ a highly rigorous local evaluation that will both inform project implementation and produce evidence of how well the intervention achieves specific outcomes related to child and family safety, permanency, and well-being. In addition, grantees will participate in a cross-site evaluation that will assess the extent to which the collective evaluation efforts were successful in contributing to the evidence base for FGDM practice.

Grant projects will implement and evaluate a FGDM program, which includes essential program elements required under this FOA. Grant projects will be designed to support families in making decisions and developing plans that nurture children in the target population, protect them from abuse and neglect, and, when appropriate, address domestic violence issues in a safe manner. Throughout the project period, grantees will devote a substantial amount of resources to the effective collection and analysis of data for evaluation purposes and to the dissemination of evaluation findings regarding the impact of the FGDM process on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for the target population of children and their families.

Drawing on demonstrated organizational capacity and expertise to conduct a FGDM program as described in this FOA, grantees will:

- Fully implement the grant project within the first year of grant funding; and
- Rigorously evaluate its impact in order to produce credible findings on the effectiveness of FGDM practice.

Grant projects funded under this FOA will be developed and implemented through strong collaboration between the grantee, the public child welfare agency (if the grantee is not a public child welfare agency), and key community partners that comprise the service array needed to achieve improved outcomes for the target population of children and their families.

Applicants should note that the authorizing legislation specifies the following:

- Federal share of the total project cost will decline and non-federal share match levels will increase in the third year of the 3-year grant period, as required by section 427(d) of the Social Security Act. (Grantees must provide at least 25 percent of the total approved cost of the project for the first 2 years of the project period and 50 percent of the total approved cost of the project in the third year of the project period.); and
- No more than 50 percent of the non-federal share may be in kind, as required by section 427(e) of the Social Security Act.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

The legislative authority is the Family Connection Grants Program (Section 427, Subpart 1, Title IV-B, of the Social Security Act) (42 U.S.C. 627), as amended by the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Pub. L. 113-183, § 221).

Description

For definitions of commonly used words in this FOA, please reference the definitions list at the end of *Section I.*

BACKGROUND

A. FGDM Programs in Child Welfare

The family group, including extended family members and fictive kin, is a potential permanency resource for children and youth in foster care or at risk of entering or returning to foster care. Family members can be engaged in building a relationship with the child/youth and determining whether they can provide a permanent home or another type of permanency resource. Family members need assistance in understanding the parenting and service needs of the child/youth and in creating a support system to help them meet those needs. The FGDM process can be an effective mechanism to engage and empower family members to assume primary responsibility in planning and decision-making in order to:

- Reduce the time that children/youth are involved with the child welfare system; and
- Meet their immediate and long-term needs for safety, permanency, and well-being within their family system.

A.1 Need and Rationale

FGDM, with its various models, has been identified as an important strategy in improving practices and outcomes related to family engagement and/or planning with family members, especially fathers. The Children's Bureau (CB) Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) monitoring process has helped states to identify strengths and areas of improvement for their child welfare systems, with the goal of improving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families receiving services. One area identified for improvement in many states was family engagement. Successful strategies that were noted in CFSRs included utilizing "formal team meetings" and "family-centered and strengths-based approaches

(team meetings, mediation)" to build effective working relationships. ("Results of the 2007 and 2008 Child and Family Services Reviews." Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ cb/cwmonitoring/results /agencies_courts.pdf.)

Another common area for improvement identified by CFSRs was assessment. Many states are addressing this by providing individualized services, stabilizing placements, and preserving family connections through FGDM programs.

Many child welfare agencies are already offering FGDM services throughout the continuum of child welfare services. Through the FGDM process, children and youth who are in or at risk of entering foster care reconnect to family members in ways that will support the family in meeting their needs for safety, permanency, and well-being in the family home. For children and youth in foster care who are preparing for reunification or for those who have returned home after foster care, the potential benefit of reconnecting with family members is the development of improved relationships with parents and extended family members, which can help prevent their return to foster care. For these children and youth, as well as for those who have not yet entered foster care, reconnecting with family members may also mean identifying and developing relationships with family members who have not been a part of their lives in the past, especially fathers and paternal relatives. Through the FGDM process, new family connections can be tapped to engage and involve family members and to strengthen the development of individualized service plans as a strategy to enable the child to return to or remain in the home.

A.2. FGDM Meetings

FGDM meetings provide a respectful forum for family members to work together to identify needs and potential solutions that will support the safety, permanency, and well-being of their children. A common component of effective FGDM programs is a framework consisting of the following four main phases: (1) request to hold the FGDM meeting, (2) preparation and planning for the FGDM meeting, (3) family's participation in the actual meeting, and (4) any further planning after the FGDM meeting. Further elements of each phase may vary depending on the complexity of the situation.

During the FGDM meeting, with the assistance of a coordinator, participants identify and discuss issues related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child/youth and the strengths and needs of the family. Together, participants make decisions and identify resource options to assist in the development and implementation of case plans:

- Formal resources: service options from child welfare agencies, community-based organizations, and other professional service providers; and
- Informal resources: options from family, friends, and any other community members.

A growing body of knowledge about FGDM practice has affirmed its value for child welfare decision-making. Rather than being considered a single meeting or series of meetings, effective FGDM practice incorporates meetings in a process, based on family-centered, strength-based, and culturally relevant values, through which family members are engaged and empowered as decision-makers on behalf of the children in their care.

Information about FGDM approaches is available from the Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of CB:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/ famcentered/decisions/

B. Family Connection Grants Program

The Family Connection Grants Program was initiated by the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-351). The Act authorized the Secretary to award competitive, matching, 36-month grants to state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies and private nonprofit organizations that have experience in working with foster children or children in kinship care arrangements for the purposes of helping children who are in, or are at risk of entering, foster care reconnect with family members.

On September 30, 2009, CB awarded the first cluster of 24 Family Connection grants. One grantee worked solely in FGDM, and five others worked on FGDM in combination with other program areas identified in the legislation. On September 30, 2011, seven additional Family Connection grant projects were funded for a 36-month project period. These projects focused on using FGDM to build protective factors for children and families. On September 30, 2012, 17 new grants were awarded, 5 of which were for Combination Family Finding/FGDM Projects. The National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections, a service of CB, disseminates information on Family Connection grant projects, including project abstracts with contact information, grantee products, and Cross-site Evaluation reports and presentations related to the Family Connection grantees. Information is available online at http://www.nrcpfc.org/grantees.html.

On September 29, 2014, the Family Connection grant program was reauthorized under Section 427, Subpart 1, Title IV-B, of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 627), as amended by the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law 113-183).

B.1 FGDM Programs Funded Under This Grant Program

Under the Family Connection Grant Program, FGDM is defined as a child welfare intervention approach, which is family-centered, strength-based, and culturally relevant. Through the FGDM process, family members are engaged and brought together with the child welfare agency and relevant service providers to make decisions and develop a plan for services to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children and youth in their care.

FGDM can also refer to one of the various models of this approach. Other models or terms, which are acceptable for projects funded under this FOA, include family team meetings, family group conferencing, family unity meetings, family team conferences, family group conferences, and team decision-making. However, any model used by grantees must include the required, essential elements identified in this FOA.

There is some confusion in the child welfare field about differences between FGDM models, and there is a lack of agreement on which program components are key for effective FGDM practice. Under this FOA, grantees will implement and rigorously evaluate models that include a set of required program elements that research has shown to be essential. The goal is to build evidence about the effectiveness of FGDM programs containing these required elements, regardless of particular model.

B.2. Lessons Learned and Recommendations from Family Connection Grantees

The *Year 2 Cross-Site Evaluation Report on FY 2009 Family Connection Grants* identified lessons learned and recommendations for Family Connection projects engaged in FGDM programs (James Bell Associates, 2011). FGDM program area evaluation findings of 2009 Family Connection FGDM grantees are summarized in the *2009-Funded Grantees Cross-Site Evaluation Report – Final* (James Bell Associates, 2013). The grantees found that intervention group FGDM models were effective in moving families in a favorable direction toward accomplishing service goals. Grantees found little difference in placement stability for children receiving FGDM services versus those who did not.

Family Connection Cross-Site Evaluation reports are available at http://www.nrcpfc.org/grantees_public/2009/Fam%20Conn%202009%20Cross-Site%20Final%20Report%206-17-13.pdf.

C. Evidence

C.1. Use of Evidence in Decision Making

The White House Evidence and Evaluation Initiative (http://www.whitehouse.gov/ blog/2013/12/17/building-evidence-base-what-works) calls on all federal agencies to demonstrate their use of evidence and rigorous evaluation in making funding decisions. The Office of Management and Budget echoes this while urging agencies to increase the use of evidence-based practices in their funded grants. CB believes that evidence-building is an integral part of the discretionary grant making process. We aspire to partner

with demonstration grantees to build the research and evaluation evidence base in child welfare, believing that this will ensure that children and families receive effective services that make a difference in their lives. The value of empirical evidence to ground child welfare practice and drive systems change was emphasized throughout the 2011 National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit.

Child welfare professionals rely on a variety of types of evidence when making decisions about how best to serve children and families. They rely on research and evaluation findings, administrative data, community and cultural history and experience, institutional knowledge, expert opinion, and practice experience. These forms of evidence are weighed and considered in concert with community and cultural values and other contextual influences, such as agency policies, to shape intervention implementation choices.

C.2. Building Evidence in Child Welfare

One manner of building evidence through the grant making process is to fund demonstration projects. CB defines demonstration projects as putting into place and testing new, unique, or distinctive approaches for delivering services to a specific population. Additional information on demonstration projects and CB's expectations of them can be found in *Section I. Project Requirements*.

CB seeks to fund demonstration grant projects that are designed to implement and evaluate interventions and disseminate their findings in ways that support CB's goals of building evidence of what works in child welfare. Thus, CB aspires to partner with demonstration grantees to build the research and evaluation evidence base in child welfare, to emphasize its importance for children and families, and to make it more accessible and robust for use in child welfare decision making.

CB expects demonstration projects that it funds to yield meaningful evidence of effectiveness for the field of child welfare and to facilitate building and disseminating evidence effectively. CB intends to support high-quality evaluation efforts that bridge child welfare practice and research in a manner that increases access of child welfare professionals to interventions that have been demonstrated to work. Accordingly, in recent years, CB has required grantees to conduct evaluations with increased levels of rigor and to disseminate findings more effectively in order that demonstration grant projects may contribute to the evidence base for child welfare practice. Rigor is important for each type of demonstration; however, the expectations for evaluation designs and methods may differ based upon the objectives of the demonstration type.

For more information:

- CDC Continuum of Evidence Effectiveness (http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/continuum -chart-a.pdf)
- EBC Scientific Rating Scale (http://www.cebc4cw.org/ratings/scientific-rating-scale/)
- National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Evidence-Based and Evidence Informed Programs and Practices Checklist for Self-Assessment (http://friendsnrc.org /component/joomdoc/doc_details/93-attachment-c-sample-evidence-based-and-evidence-informed -programs-and-practices-checklist)

D. Effectiveness of FGDM

D.1 What the Research Shows

In 1990, Oregon was the first state to begin using the FGDM process. Since that time, the use of FGDM in child welfare has become widespread, as many jurisdictions have implemented a model of FGDM to engage families in the decision-making process for ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of their children. Current research has shown that FGDM practice holds the potential, when effectively implemented, to help improve outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system.

Many studies have addressed the various benefits of the FGDM process, including significantly increased likelihood that children would be placed in kin foster homes and be discharged to family or relatives. One

study found that as a result of family team meetings, children were more likely to be placed in relative foster care, have family-group-type permanency goals in their case plans (e.g., reunify with parents or live with relatives), have shorter stays in care, and be discharged to their parents or kin (Pennell, Edwards, & Burford, 2010). However, more evaluative research is needed to assess long term outcomes.

The traditional child welfare casework approach can fail to fully consider or use the larger family system, which can provide a broader network to support the family's well-being because families, more so than the worker, are familiar with their own needs and informal resource options. The larger family system should include the fathers and/or paternal relatives. Research supports that FGDM is effective in involving paternal relatives in case planning (Jenkins & Kinney, 2009).

Fidelity to the FGDM process is important, given the forensic atmosphere and orientation to risk of the child protective services system. This atmosphere can hinder true collaborative and participatory decision making (Healy, Darlington, & Yellowlees, 2011). Factors that improve fidelity to FGDM process include successful planning, meaningful family participation, and regular monitoring. Conveners can help reduce the inherent power inequities between the system and the family by attending to things such as meeting location, preparing an agenda, providing a welcoming environment, and paying attention to practical issues such as access to child care and transportation (Healy, Darlington, & Yellowlees, 2011). Supportive professionals can ensure meaningful family leadership and participation (Rauktis et al., 2013). Regular fidelity monitoring of FGDM practice can lead to concrete steps to improve the practice. This monitoring can lead to needed changes to training and support of professional roles, and improvement of meeting facilitation. Fidelity to FGDM becomes critical when the practice is being implemented in areas where there may be differences in worker experience and attitude (Rauktis et al., 2013).

Diligent implementation is critical to the success of an FGDM project regardless of the experience in using FGDM. Projects must be well-resourced and adequate staff training provided at the inception of the project. The attitudes of the casework staff are a potential barrier to successful implantation. Not believing in the practice and resistance to giving families the power to meaningfully participate in decision making are the most detrimental. Consistent and supportive leadership facilitates the growth, sustainability, and reduction of casework barriers to FGDM practice (Rauktis et al., 2013).

Although FGDM practice is widespread in child welfare, many FGDM programs are not thoroughly based on evidence of effectiveness, due to the lack of rigorous research in this area. Addressing this need, much of the recent FGDM research has focused on building evidence around program components that are considered key to effective practice of FGDM. This research includes studies on the following:

- An independent coordinator/convener that is culturally respectful and responsible for holding the family group meeting with agency personnel (Doolan, 2007; American Humane, 2008; American Humane, 2011; Healy, Darlington & Yellowlees, 2012);
- Cultural differences in family decision making characteristics must be taken into account in order to ensure family engagement in the process (McCrae & Fusco, 2010);
- CPS agency recognition of the family as a key partner in the decision making process (Doolan, 2007; American Humane, 2008; Healy, Darlington & Yellowlees, 2012);
- Families can meet privately to make plans; if the plans meet agency specifications, these plans are given priority, and resources and services are provided to ensure plan success (Doolan, 2007; American Humane, 2008, 2011); and
- Resources are available to convene the group (Doolan, 2007; American Humane, 2008).

There have been several studies where the effectiveness of FGDM has been shown to be mixed:

- Chapin Hall (Daro et al., 2005) assessed impacts of the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children initiative related to core participant and community outcomes. Using strategies common in quasi-experimental evaluations, the study did not demonstrate consistent impacts on subsequent maltreatment reports during the evaluation's Phase II observation period. Impacts on child welfare practice were similarly mixed. While the study demonstrated the ability to marshal additional

service resources for families, survey data from both local agency managers and child welfare workers showed minimal evidence of increased collaboration and no evidence of improved service availability or service quality.

- Within the context of a state's Title IV-E Waiver Evaluation, two counties used different FGDM models with different populations. Children between the ages of birth to 18 years old who were evaluated to be at moderate risk for further maltreatment, but remained at home, were the target in one county, while the other county targeted children between the ages of 2 to 12 years who were placed in out of home care. Although the models implemented were consistent with the tenets of FGDM found in the literature, they differed in structure. One county used the family unity model while the other blended the family unity model with family group conferencing models. In a randomized control trial in which participants were randomly assigned in both counties, Berzin et al. found that FGDM was no more effective than usual practice in improving safety, permanency stability, and permanency outcomes (2008).
- Lorentzen (2008) found that FGDM (defined as a discussion between the family and an interdisciplinary team focusing on the reasons the child is at risk, the identification of family strengths, and the development of a plan to ensure the child's safety) had no effect on service utilization, as defined as the number of client contacts, prescribed services, and case closing.

The studies confirm the need for evaluation findings to be used to inform continuing efforts (Daro et al., 2005), and authors note that further evaluation and research focused on long term child outcomes needs to be conducted, that the components of FGDM need to be consistently implemented, and studies are needed that include larger sample sizes and longer term follow-up (Berzin et al., 2007). Although much research and program evaluation has been done in the area of FGDM (Morris & Connolly, 2010), continued effort must be made to identify and to better understand the core elements needed for successful FGDM programs. Morris & Connolly (2012) report that established methods for evaluating research quality are not applicable as the literature reflects the effects of innovative practices. Increased sample sizes and rigorous experimental designs are needed for ongoing practice development (Wang et al., 2012).

D.2 Need to Build Evidence on Effectiveness of FGDM

FGDM implementation and impact evaluation findings from around the United States and internationally have resulted in the classification of FGDM as a "promising" intervention (California Evidence Based Clearinghouse [CEBC], 2013). For purposes of this FOA, "promising" interventions are those that possess an identifiable model that can be assessed for fidelity and have been shown to have some level of effectiveness by one or more evaluation studies.

In addition to promoting family engagement through FGDM in order to improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families, a fundamental goal of this FOA is to solicit proposals for projects that will both successfully implement and rigorously test an FGDM model in efforts to grow the evidence base for FGDM.

In order to meaningfully strengthen the evidence base for FGDM, research and evaluation findings are needed that can demonstrate the following:

- FGDM model stability that has been assessed using reliable and valid fidelity measures;
- Clearly articulated and operationalized core components that represent the essential and indispensable building blocks for the FGDM intervention;
- Evidence of effectiveness, including the demonstration of a causal link between the intervention and its intended outcomes; and
- A well-developed implementation manual that can provide guidance for interested jurisdictions in their efforts to implement FGDM successfully and with fidelity.

The demonstration projects funded under this FOA are expected to test the efficacy of FGDM. Consistent with CB's approach to evidence-building explained in *C. Evidence*, grantees will have the capacity to contribute to the evidence base for FGDM through demonstrating model stability, clearly articulating core

components, identifying a causal link between the intervention and its intended outcomes, and potentially developing an implementation manual that can provide guidance for other jurisdictions interested in implementing FGDM. To this end, demonstration grants funded under this FOA will conduct rigorous evaluations of identifiable FGDM models that include the essential program elements that are required under this FOA. The inclusion of these required elements will serve as the foundation to further develop, articulate, and operationalize the core components of FGDM as part of the evidence-building process.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

A. Project Implementation

The grantee will have the project fully staffed and operating within 90 days following the notification of the award. The project director, the evaluator, and key partners, including the local or state child welfare agency partner if the grantee is a private organization, will travel to Washington, DC, to attend (a) the Kick-off Meeting for funded grantees to be held within the first 3 months of the project (first year only) and (b) the 3-day Annual Grantees Meeting, usually held in the spring.

All grantee materials, products, publications, news releases, etc., will include this notice:

Funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #_____. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funders, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services. This information is in the public domain. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it, but please credit [Grantee name].

NOTE: See *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission/The Project Description/ Approach* for application instructions.

A.1. Purpose

FGDM project activities will support the placement and maintenance of the target population of children and youth in safe, permanent living arrangements with family members, where their well-being needs are met. Maternal and paternal relatives and fictive kin are potential resources to meet a range of permanency needs, including, but not limited to, placement. Effective engagement of these family members via the FGDM process will assist them in building or strengthening relationships with the child or youth and will empower them to participate fully in planning and decision-making on their behalf.

Rigorous project evaluation activities, including implementation, impact, and cost studies, will yield findings to inform the field about what works and why in FGDM programs and will help build evidence of effectiveness of FGDM as a child welfare intervention.

A.2. Target Population

Grant projects funded under this FOA will test the effectiveness of the FGDM process as a family-centered, strength-based, culturally relevant service approach aimed at helping the target population of children and youth in, or at risk of entering into, foster care achieve and sustain permanency with family members. Children and youth in the target population may be:

- In foster care, with plans for reunification and/or relative placement;
- In formal or informal kinship care placements; or
- Living at home with parents, with child welfare involvement due to significant risk of their removal.

Projects may focus on a specific subpopulation of children in the target population. The families of the at-risk children and youth in the target population may be served by the child welfare agency, or by family support or family preservation programs, or may be receiving no services. They may be court-ordered to receive services, or may have been diverted from the child welfare system by differential response/alternative response programs.

A.3. Assessment of Need

FGDM projects funded under this FOA will serve a defined geographic area and a target population as specified in this FOA, which is based on characteristics of children/youth and families and anticipated numbers to be served. These will be justified by an analysis of current local data. The assessment will document demographic factors and other data related to causes for the identified target population of children to be in foster care or at risk of entry or re-entry into foster care. The assessment will also identify common service needs of the target population of children/youth and their families, such as services to address children's mental health needs and parental substance abuse needs. It will analyze the availability and accessibility of the needed service array, both formal and informal, to effectively address these needs.

A.4. Program Design

- For the purposes of serving the target population as required under this FOA, grantees may implement a new FGDM program, or may expand, enhance, or further target an existing FGDM program, provided it meets the requirements under this FOA;

- The implementation and evaluation of FGDM represent the sole focus of this demonstration grant cluster. In order to best evaluate outcomes associated with FGDM, it is important to be able to determine whether it is the FGDM approach that is truly impacting outcomes as opposed to services associated with another part of the child welfare program. The ability to detect the change in outcomes attributable to FGDM becomes more difficult if the approach is evaluated as an integrated component of another larger service model. Therefore, for all grant projects funded under this FOA, the FGDM program must be a distinct and recognizable component of casework practice, and grant funds cannot be used to support any other child welfare intervention. However, the target population of children and their families may be receiving other types of services from the child welfare agency or its partner agencies;

- Grantees will implement and evaluate projects that are clearly based on identifiable FGDM models and include all essential program elements required under this FOA. Essential elements of the proposed FGDM program will be fully defined, comprehensively addressed, and clearly linked in project plans with the goal of further developing, articulating, and operationalizing the core components of FGDM as part of the evidence-building process. Proposed plans will include detailed explanations of program goals, timing, participants, and intended outcomes, as well as key program features, including training components, with descriptions of training manuals, materials, brochures, and documents. This approach will allow evaluators to draw valid comparisons between different models used; and

- In accordance with the funding legislation, FGDM projects funded under this FOA, when appropriate, shall address domestic violence issues in a safe manner and facilitate connecting children exposed to domestic violence to appropriate services, including reconnection with the abused parent when appropriate.

  - Guidance on how to implement FGDM within the context of domestic violence has been prepared by the Family Violence Prevention Fund and the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group. (See references following.)

A.4.a. Required Program Elements for Funded Projects

Several elements have emerged through research as critical to the success of an FGDM model (CEBC, 2013). These include:

- The presence of an independent, non-case carrying coordinator who acts as a facilitator for the family group meeting;

  - The coordinator is someone who is respectful and recognizes that all families are unique and experts in themselves;
  - (S)he is also committed to developing an understanding of the families' cultural values, assumptions, worldviews, and decision-making models;

- Recognition and acknowledgment by the child welfare agency that the family group represents a key decision-making partner in the child welfare case process, including the commitment of time and resources to convene the family group meeting;
- The inclusion of private family time so that family group members have the opportunity to meet on their own to process information and develop a plan to address identified concerns without the presence of child welfare authorities or service providers;
- Preference afforded to the case plan developed by the family over any other plan as long as child safety is maintained and other agency concerns are adequately addressed; and
- The provision of the services, resources, and supports necessary to implement the case plan agreed upon by the family and the child welfare agency.

Grant projects funded under this FOA, regardless of the FGDM model or term employed, will include the essential elements identified above. These elements are representative of what the child welfare field has learned to date about what contributes to successful FGDM models. CB does not consider these essential elements to be the same as core components for FGDM models. Instead, they shall be used as the foundation of grantees' efforts to further develop, articulate, and operationalize the core components of FGDM as part of the evidence-building process. Core components include the principles, functions, activities, or elements of the interventions that address the identified problem and are essential to achieving the outcomes desired (Blase & Fixsen, 2013). The operationalization of these core components will include a clear explanation of the active ingredients and activities that comprise each core component to the extent that they can be taught, learned, and implemented in other child welfare settings and jurisdictions. CB expects grant projects funded under this FOA to contribute to the further definition and operationalization of core components for FGDM.

Projects funded under this FOA will use a strategy for assessing the behaviors and practices that reflect the underlying values and principles of the FGDM model that is both practical and appropriate. At the conclusion of the project period, grantees will be expected to deliver findings related to the core components of their specific FGDM program, including a rationale for the inclusion and demonstration of effective implementation of each component.

A.4.b. Implementation Plan

Projects funded under this FOA will be based on a strong plan for implementation of an FGDM program for the target population of children and their families, which includes the essential elements required under this FOA. The plan may be to:

- Initiate a new program for the use of FGDM;
- Enhance or modify an existing program for the target population; or
- Expand or bring to scale an existing FGDM program that serves this population.

Grantees will follow a well documented and well justified plan for effective implementation. The plan will document and describe how grantees will develop and monitor the necessary processes and mechanisms to ensure that:

- The FGDM program is implemented as a process and way of practice rather than disconnected meetings;
- Grant projects funded under this FOA will be fully implemented within the first year of grant funding so the grantee can focus on conducting the most rigorous evaluation with sufficient participants in order to produce a high level of findings over the remaining 2 years of the project period. Within the first year (budget period), CB expects grantees to complete all start-up activities, obtain institutional review board (IRB) approval, disseminate information to promote agency and community awareness of the project, begin accepting referrals, and provide FGDM services;
- Children and youth will be engaged in the FGDM meetings in age and developmentally appropriate manners. Family members, including fathers and paternal relatives, will be effectively engaged and involved in FGDM meetings and in the planning and development of service plans. The FGDM

process will address challenges and barriers to the involvement of children and family members;

- The FGDM process will identify formal and informal services and resources in the extended family and community that are based on the needs of the children and their family members, develop individualized/family service plans to address these needs, and assist children and family members in accessing needed services and supports. Individualized service planning, facilitated by FGDM meetings, will be family-centered, strengths-based, and culturally relevant;
- The project will identify and address systemic implementation challenges, including:

    - Determining criteria for referring a case to FGDM, while keeping in mind the unique needs and circumstances of the target population and community; and
    - Developing necessary supports for participating agency staff to address training and workload issues;

- The project will maintain the meaningful involvement of family members, community organizations, partners, and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis in the implementation and evaluation of the grant program; and
- The project will engage in effective sustainability planning to incorporate successful program activities in child welfare agency policies and practice, and sustain improved FGDM practice at the conclusion of federal funding.

A.4.c. Collaboration

Importance of Collaboration in Effective FGDM Programs

Grantees will coordinate with existing agency services and services of the broad child welfare system and, in addition, will develop or enhance a strong plan of collaboration with and commitment from relevant community organizations, including faith-based organizations, in order to:

- Offer an array of services that are targeted to meet the needs of the target population that are identified through the FGDM process and are both available and accessible to these children and their families;
- Identify space for FGDM meetings in close proximity to where family members reside;
- Adequately address safety needs when working with families where there is a co-occurrence of domestic violence; and
- Ensure that the project and collaborating organizations will maintain and respect confidentiality during the planning, preparation, and implementation of the FGDM process.

Grantees will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all collaborating organizations and will ensure their commitment to carrying these out throughout the project period in order to provide the service array to support the FGDM process. Grantees will ensure participation in the program of all key service providers, both public and private, including domestic violence programs, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services. Third-party agreements or other assurances will document the understanding and willingness of key partners to carry out identified roles and responsibilities in the project. These agreements will specify relevant partner activities related to FGDM referrals, participation in FGDM meetings, and provision of assessments and services specified in the individualized FGDM service plan, as well as partner activities such as data sharing for the purpose of the local evaluation. Grantees will develop or strengthen processes to support these collaborations throughout the project period, including creating and maintaining communication channels and decision-making mechanisms to support continued engagement of partners and other collaborating organizations, and facilitate identification and response to system-level challenges and barriers related to project goals and objectives.

Expectations of Grantees That Are Not the Public Child Welfare Agency

If the lead grantee responsible for administering the cooperative agreement is not the public child welfare agency, the grantee must establish a strong partnership in the project with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical

area(s). CB considers this partnership to be key to project success.

This partnership should be meaningful, with detailed roles and responsibilities of the child welfare partner(s) clearly defined and understood, and formalized agreements made to ensure that each partner fully understands and is fully committed to the proposed project, and demonstrates a willingness to be fully engaged in the activities that are described in the application. The lead grantee is expected to develop a joint communications framework with the child welfare partner to convey project information and updates, address concerns about barriers or challenges, and serve as a forum for joint work. The grantee will establish mechanisms, such as advisory groups and steering committees, for timely collaboration on project activities. The grantee will devote sufficient time and resources to nurturing the partner relationship to ensure that the child welfare agency(ies) will follow through on commitments to the project, regardless of changes in administration, economic status, or other foreseeable factors.

B. Building Evidence for FGDM

B.1. Evaluation

As demonstration grants, CB expects grantees to build evidence that is reliable and valid on the impact of FGDM models on improved outcomes at the parent/child/family and system levels. However, as stated through this FOA, CB endeavors to make a significant contribution to the evidence of FGDM, and by extension to the child welfare field more broadly, through these demonstration projects that will implement, at a minimum, the required elements of FGDM as described in *Section I. A.4, Program Design* of the Project Requirements. Grantees will achieve this through the conduct of a local evaluation, as well as participation in a cross-site evaluation. Accordingly, grantees are expected to devote a substantial amount of resources to the collection of data for evaluation purposes and the evaluation of the impact of FGDM programs on outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families being served. Specifically, grantees are encouraged to allocate between 20 to 25 percent of the budget for evaluation-related activities.

Local evaluation plans must include an implementation study, impact study, and cost study.

The grantee will archive data from the program evaluation with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect within 90 days of the termination of federal funding for the project. The grantee's IRB and research participants should be made aware that the data from the project will be archived and made available to other researchers after personal identifiers have been removed. Archiving will involve providing individual respondent data in electronic form and the accompanying documentation, including the codebook, the final report, and copies of the research instruments, as appropriate. A manual describing the guidelines of the Archive, Depositing Data with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: A Handbook for Contributors, is available from the Archive directly at the Family Life Development Center, MVR Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 (phone: (607) 255-7799), from the Archive website at http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu, or from the Child Welfare Information Gateway website at http://childwelfare.gov.

The following resources, as well as references listed at the end of this section, provide additional information on theories of change, logic models, and evaluation designs:

Child Welfare Information Gateway - *Evaluation Toolkit and Logic Model Builder*: (https://www.child welfare.gov/ preventing/evaluating/toolkit.cfm)
Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation: (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/ other_resrch/pm_gu ide_eval/index.html)

B.1.a. Levels of Rigor

There are a number of evaluation designs that offer varying degrees of rigor. The most rigorous design is the randomized control trial (RCT), also called an experimental design. In RCTs, cases that are randomly assigned to an experimental group are eligible to participate in the new program or service being tested, and cases that are randomly assigned to a control group receive all usual and existing services except the

new program or service being tested. Any changes in outcomes experienced by the experimental group, therefore, can reasonably be attributed to the intervention and not due to any differences between the two groups.

When an experimental design is not possible, quasi-experimental designs allow for non-random assignment to experimental and comparison groups. Since the assignment is not random, this design is more vulnerable to the presence of differences between the experimental and comparison groups; however, these differences can be minimized through different techniques. In the overflow/wait list design, cases are placed in a comparison group when caseloads for the new experimental program are full. A matched case design is one in which each experimental group case is individually matched with a comparison case based on selected matching variables (e.g., presenting problems, demographic characteristics), using a statistical approach to minimize differences between the groups (e.g., propensity score matching).

Other, less rigorous evaluation designs include the time series, comparison group/site, and pre-post test designs. However, without an equivalent comparison group that uses child/family level data, any differences in outcomes cannot confidently be attributed specifically to the intervention be evaluated.

B.1.b. Requirements for Rigor

Experimental design only: The purpose of this FOA is to build on the existing evidence for FGDM, which necessitates the conduct of an experimental design in order to establish causality. Experimental designs involving random assignment to treatment and control groups are the preferred method for determining the intervention impacts. Therefore, grantees will employ an experimental evaluation design.

B.1.c. Local Evaluation

Theory of Change; Logic Model

As required by all demonstration projects, grantees must conduct a local evaluation using a rigorous design, which is based upon a theory of change and guided by a logic model. A theory of change is a set of beliefs or hypotheses about how a program works and why. A well-developed theory of change identifies the expected short-term and long-term outcomes of the demonstration project, and how and why the proposed FGDM model is expected to address those outcomes. It may also include a series of "if-then" or "so that" statements that address the logical results of an action and illustrate the conceptual linkages between the identified problems and potential solutions. Developing a theory of change offers the opportunity for key stakeholders to understand one another's thinking and to clearly identify what outcomes will be used to measure the demonstration project's success.

A logic model operationalizes a project's theory of change by identifying inputs; defining interventions; outlining the direct outputs of those interventions; operationalizing desired project goals into testable, measurable outcomes; articulating logical linkages between project activities/services, outputs, and expected outcomes; and testing and refining assumptions about linkages. All of these components lay the foundation for a well-developed evaluation design.

Implementation Study

The implementation study is expected to capture details about the selected FGDM model, measure the extent to which the model is being practiced with fidelity, describe the population of children and families who receive FGDM, describe the linkages between the collaborative partners that will help ensure that identified needs of children and family members are met, and identify factors that facilitated and hindered the implementation of the model. At a minimum, the following key implementation study questions will be addressed:

1. What are the core components of the FGDM model?
2. Did FGDM facilitators demonstrate fidelity to the FGDM model?
3. How do you successfully engage families to use the FGDM model?

4. What contextual factors impact project implementation?
5. What do children and families think about FGDM?

Impact Study

The impact study will test the effectiveness of the FGDM model in impacting the key outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being that align with the research questions that follow, for the target population and any subpopulation(s), as well as the impact of FDGM on organizations and systems. The study design will identify and justify indicators and measures of those indicators that are consistent with the focus and goals of the FGDM program to be implemented and evaluated. Justification for the measures will be based on the goals of the program and the evidence for the technical soundness of the measures, including reliability, validity, and cultural appropriateness. In addition to the technical viability of a measure, the cost of the instruments, the type of personnel needed to adequately administer and score the measures, and how much time would be needed to do the assessments will be considered.

At a minimum, the study will address the following key impact evaluation questions related to child/family level outcomes for the target population or subpopulation(s):

- To what extent does participation in FGDM affect outcome areas of interest, including:

    - Substantiated maltreatment reports and re-reports;
    - Rates of entry and re-entry into out-of-home care;
    - Placement type and stability;
    - Families' capacity to provide for children's needs; and
    - Children's social, emotional, behavioral, health, and educational well-being?

- To what extent does FGDM improve the number of formal and informal supports for parents, caregivers, and other family members?
- Does FGDM result in expanded or stronger family connections, including with fathers and paternal relatives?
- Does FGDM result in increased family stability?
- To what extent does the FGDM project increase child and family involvement in planning and decision-making?
- To what extent does participation in FGDM reduce service barriers related to availability and accessibility, and address individualized needs of children and families?

At a minimum, the study will address the following key impact evaluation questions related to organization and systems level outcomes:

Does the FGDM process result in greater access to individualized services as well as access to an enhanced service array for the target population of children and their families?
Is participation in FGDM meetings reflected in the case plans?

Cost Study

Given the scarce resources available for child welfare programs and the push to establish cost efficiency measures, demonstration projects funded under this FOA are expected to conduct a cost study that will provide state, local, and tribal policymakers with the information they need to make more thoughtful decisions about resource allocation in their communities. Under this FOA, the cost study is the systematic collection, categorization, and analysis of service delivery costs. It describes and analyzes project costs using aggregate, case-level, or both types of data, and is expected to yield information that can inform decisions about resource allocation. Factors to be considered in this study may include, but are not limited to, staff caseloads, supervisor to worker ratios, cost per family or unit of service, training, and consultation costs.

The key cost study questions that these demonstration projects are expected to address, at a minimum, are listed below:

- What are the total annual costs of operating FGDM?
- How are both personnel (e.g., salaries, benefits) and non-personnel (e.g., facilities, overhead, contracts) resources allocated among cost categories and program activities?
- How do cost expenditure patterns differ between FGDM activities compared to traditional child welfare activities?

Grantees should anticipate working with other projects funded under this FOA, CB, and the cross-site evaluator to develop common cost templates for aggregate and programmatic costs to be reported to the cross-site evaluator. For example, common cost elements might include costs for program management and administration, training and supervision, services, and costs for on-going services.

Expectation to Use a Qualified, External Evaluator

CB expects grantees to partner with an external evaluator for the local evaluation. External evaluators from different types of organizations may include university professors or university-based teams, independent consultants, or research/consulting firms. The local evaluators, defined as an individual, team, or an organization such as a university or evaluation contractor, must have the staff qualifications and expertise, organizational capacity, and sufficient financial resources to implement a rigorous evaluation of a project as required by this FOA and within the 36-month project period.

B.1.d. Institutional Review Board (IRB)

CB expects grantees to have a sound plan for securing informed consent and implementing an IRB review within the timelines for program implementation required under this FOA. Any evaluation collecting information from program participants or staff will require an IRB review; it is expected that this will include all grant programs under this FOA. The grantee is expected to identify the IRB it expects to use and demonstrate a familiarity with that IRB's procedures and review requirements.

Please note that when experimental designs involving random assignment to treatment and control groups are used for determining the intervention impacts, grantees need to describe how participant protections are adequately addressed. When random assignment is used, grantees also must provide adequate information on alternative services for families not selected for the services provided. General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/. Grantees also may contact Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) by email (ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900).

B.1.e. Participation in the Cross-Site Evaluation

As a condition of the cooperative agreement, grantees also will participate fully in the Family Connection cross-site evaluation effort that relates to this FOA, which will examine the effectiveness of the awarded grants in achieving positive outcomes for children and families and meaningfully contributing to the evidence base for FGDM. The cross-site evaluation documents the progress of projects within each cluster, addressing key implementation and impact questions at the parent, child, family, organization, and service delivery system levels and describing the unique aspects of the projects.

Key activities conducted by the cross-site evaluation team include:

- Working with grantees to develop a cluster-level logic model that depicts common elements in program functioning and anticipated impact, challenges experienced by children and families, program activities that address challenges, and expected pathways of change;
- Analyzing descriptions of service models and best practices, service implementation, service barriers and facilitators, collaboration between the grantee and partner agencies, and other key aspects of project functioning;
- Assessing the differences and commonalities of the service models described by the grantees, and analyzing the extent to which there is a consistent intervention model for FGDM with clearly defined core components reflected among the grantee cluster; and
- Synthesizing implementation evaluation data and aggregate findings from anticipated outcomes

documented in logic models.

Grantees are expected to work with the cross-site evaluation team in data collection and reporting. Key grantee roles and responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and providing feedback of cross-site evaluation team-developed grantee summaries and profiles describing key aspects of each project and evaluation;
- Participating in one or more site visits conducted by the cross-site evaluation team to gather data on grantee and evaluation processes and outcomes;
- Partnering with the cross-site evaluation team and other local evaluation teams to develop instruments and measures that could be used to evaluate identified constructs consistently across jurisdictions, and completing an evaluation reporting template that is part of semi-annual reporting. The evaluation template is designed to capture national cross-site evaluation information in specific ways while allowing grantees the flexibility to report results consistent with local data collection procedures. Template categories include (1) evaluation progress and modifications (planning, goals, questions, evaluation design, methodology, data analysis, reporting, and dissemination); (2) implementation evaluation (unit of analysis, number served, demographics, type of service by participant, fidelity, and other outputs); (3) impact evaluation (short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes; treatment and control group data; and analytical interpretation); and (4) cost evaluation (data related to staff caseloads, supervisor to worker ratios, cost per family or unit of service, training, and consultation costs).

Grantees may be asked to consider incorporating the following into local evaluation plans:

- A selected number of commonly defined outcomes that address key safety, permanency, and well-being constructs. Examples of outcomes might include: substantiated reports of child maltreatment, child placement diversion, child placement status at discharge, child reunification with parents, number of identified family connections, caregiver and family needs, protective factors, and child functioning. Outcomes could be assessed through primary data or secondary, administrative data. Outcomes could be short-term, intermediate, or long-term;
- A selected number of implementation or impact evaluation instruments for grantees to incorporate into local evaluations. Selections will take into account the instrument's applicability and ability to capture relevant data for projects, along with respondent burden, ease of administration and scoring, and cost; and
- Recommendations for primary and secondary data sources to incorporate into local evaluations to inform implementation and provide context and meaning to child and family-level outcomes. Examples include sources to assess client satisfaction, cultural sensitivity, effective collaboration, organizational development, etc., along with other data collection methods such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys of program leadership, staff members, program partners, and service participants.

These activities will help the cross-site evaluation team determine the degree to which grantees made concerted efforts to provide services that resulted in improved evidence of child safety, permanent and stable living situations, continued family relationships, and enhanced capacity of families to care for their children's needs. Positive outcomes will support evidence-based and promising practices that may be used by other programs and the child welfare field.

Toward the end of the grant award period, grantees may be asked to partner with CB, the cross-site evaluation team, and the other local evaluation teams to assess the extent to which the collective evaluation efforts were successful in building the evidence-base for FGDM and establishing an evidence-supported intervention. Relevant activities may include:

- Participating in discussions and activities to determine the extent to which there was a consistently defined intervention model, including core components, for FGDM tested by this grantee cluster;
- Participating in discussions and activities to determine the extent to which a causal relationship can

be identified between the programmatic activities conducted by the grantees and the outcomes that were observed; and

- If intended outcomes are observed and evaluation results yield a consistently defined intervention model across the cluster, working together to develop an accompanying implementation manual.

Finally, grantees will be expected to participate in dissemination efforts related to the cross-site evaluation, including presenting at designated conferences, meetings, and/or webinars and contributing to the development of written reports, scholarly publications, issue briefs, or other resources for the field.

C. Demonstration Projects

Activities funded under this funding opportunity announcement are demonstration projects. At CB a demonstration project is one that puts into place and tests new, unique, or distinctive approaches for delivering services to a specific population.

Demonstration projects may test whether a program or service that has proven successful in one location or setting can work in a different context. Demonstration projects may test a theory, idea, or method that reflects a new and different way of thinking about service delivery. Demonstration projects may be designed to address the needs of a very specific group of clients or focus on one service component available to all clients. The scope of these projects may be broad and comprehensive or narrow and targeted to specific populations. A demonstration project must:

- Develop and implement an evidence-informed model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- Determine the effectiveness, costs, and benefits of the model and its components or strategies using a rigorous evaluation approach;
- Disseminate strategically and effectively- collaborate with other projects in the grant cluster to establish goals, identify and engage with target audiences; produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products based on the programs evaluations; and disseminate information about project activities, products, and findings; and
- Contribute to the evidence base on strategies, practices, and programs that may be used to guide replication, program improvements, systems change, or testing in other settings.

D. Working with Other CB Discretionary Grant Projects

CB currently funds approximately 200 discretionary grants projects in over 40 different program areas. Through their work with a broad spectrum of populations within the child welfare arena, discretionary grantees develop a wealth of knowledge across numerous program areas. The findings from these programs can be useful in informing the field. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the knowledge being developed by CB discretionary research and demonstration projects, including other Family Connection grant projects, when developing proposals in response to this FOA. For more information on CB discretionary grant programs, please see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ cb/grants/discretionary-grant and http://library.childwelfare.gov/cbgrants/ws/library/docs/cb_grants/GrantHome.

CB's website (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb) provides a wide range of information and links to other relevant websites. Before preparing an application, applicants can learn more about CB's mission and programs by exploring the website.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this FOA, the following alphabetical list of definitions of relevant terms is provided:

Evidence: Child welfare professionals rely on a variety of types of evidence when making decisions about how best to serve children and families. They rely on research and evaluation findings, administrative data, community and cultural history and experience, institutional knowledge, expert opinion, and practice

experience, for example. Together, these forms of evidence are weighed and considered in concert with values and a variety of other influences (e.g., agency policy) to shape choices about the interventions to be implemented.

Family: Biological or adoptive parents, extended family members and other relatives, as well as friends, neighbors and others who may not be related by blood or marriage, but who play an important, positive role in the life of the child/youth and are considered to be part of the family.

Family-Centered Practice: Service approaches designed to: strengthen and empower families to protect and nurture their children; safely preserve family relationships and connections, when appropriate; recognize the strong influence social systems have on individual behavior; enhance family autonomy; respect the rights, values, and cultures of families; focus on the entire family rather than selected individuals within a family; and promote protective factors and reduce risk factors for child maltreatment at the individual, family, community, and societal levels.

Family Group Decision-making (FGDM): An intervention approach in which family members and relevant service providers are brought together in a meeting or series of meetings to make decisions to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of their children and to develop a plan for services. FGDM refers to one of the various models of this approach. Other models or terms, which are acceptable for projects funded under this FOA, include: family team meetings, family group conferencing, family unity meetings, family team conferences, family group conferences, and team decision-making.

Fictive Kin: Persons not related by blood or marriage but who have a strong, positive emotional tie with the child/youth and play a positive role in the life of the child/youth, such as godparents, neighbors, family friends, school staff, coaches, or a member of the tribe.

Levels of Research Evidence: Based on evidence of their effectiveness, interventions are rated as emerging, promising, supported, and well-supported. The level of evidence of effectiveness is based on factors such as external and ecological validity, implementation guidance, independent replication, type of evidence/research design, internal validity, effect, and publication of findings in peer-reviewed journals.

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II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	$2,010,000
Expected Number of Awards:	3

Award Ceiling:	$670,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	$500,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	$670,000 Per Budget Period
Anticipated Project Start Date:	09/29/2015

Length of Project Periods:
36-month project with three 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Awards:
Awards made under this announcement are subject to the availability of federal funds.

Applications requesting an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period, as stated in this section*,* will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the*Award Ceiling* listed for the project period. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors.*

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, grantees will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A grantee's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** See *Section III.2.* of this announcement for information on cost-sharing or matching requirements.

The initial award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the federal government.

Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement

A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding federal assistance in which substantial federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of CB and the awardee prior to the award. CB anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. The involvement and collaboration includes:

- CB and recipient joint collaboration in the planning and performance of key programmatic activities under this FOA for project implementation, including collaboration and dissemination;
- CB and recipient joint collaboration in planning and performance of rigorous local evaluation and participation in the cross-site evaluation, for the purpose of evidence-building, as described in this FOA;
- Close monitoring by CB of the requirements stated in this FOA that limit the awardee's discretion with respect to target population and scope of services offered; and
- Close monitoring by CB during performance, which may, in order to ensure compliance with the intent of this funding, exceed those federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities.

Please see *Section IV.5 Funding Restrictions* for limitations on the use of federal funds awarded under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies; private nonprofit organizations that have experience in working with foster children or children in kinship care arrangements; and institutions of higher education (as defined under section 1001 of title 20).

The legislation specifies that if the applicant is a private organization, it shall provide documentation of support from the relevant local or state child welfare agency and a description of how the organization plans to coordinate its services and activities with those offered by the relevant local or state child welfare agency.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors.*

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity announcement. Faith-based organizations are encouraged to review the ACF Policy on Grants to Faith-Based Organizations at: http: //www.acf.hhs.gov/acf-policy-on-grants-to-faith-based-organizations.

See "Legal Status of Applicant Entity" in *Section IV.2* for documentation required to support eligibility.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: Yes

Grantees are required to meet a non-federal share of the project cost, in accordance with **the Social Security Act section 427(d) & (e), 42 U.S.C. § 627(d) and (e).**

Grantees must provide at least 25 percent of the total approved cost of the project for the first 2 years of the project period and 50 percent of the total approved cost of the project in the third year of the project period. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF (federal) share and the non-federal share.

For example, in the first year of the project period, in order to meet the match requirements, a project requesting $600,000 in ACF (federal) funds must provide a non-federal share of the approved total project cost of at least $200,000, which is 25 percent of total approved project cost of $800,000.

The non-federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. No more than 50 percent of the non-federal share may be in-kind. Grantees will be held accountable for commitments of non-federal resources even if they exceed the amount of the required match. Failure to provide the required amount will result in the disallowance of federal funds. A lack of supporting documentation at the time of application submission will not exclude the application from competitive review.

III.3. Other

DUNS Number and System for Award Management Eligibility Requirements (SAM.gov)
All applicants must have a DUNS Number (http:// fedgov. dnb.com /webform) and an active registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) on the System for Award Management (SAM.gov, www.sam.gov).

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, registration at SAM.gov must be active throughout the life of the award.

Plan ahead. Allow up to 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e. Grants.gov.

This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the "Help" tab at https://www.sam.gov.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency, or receive subawards directly from recipients of those grant funds to:

- Be registered in the SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by an OPDIV; and
- Provide its active DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV.

ACF is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, ACF:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

Applications that request an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period as stated in *Section II. Award Information,* will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at www.Grants.gov. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Applicants that do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the Internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required

electronic application submission are found in "Request an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission" in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission.*

Application Deadlines

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview and* in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times.* Electronic applications submitted to www.Grants.gov after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from www.Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to www.Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period, and prior to the due date and time, which fail the www.Grants.gov validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by, ACF.

Each time an application is submitted via www.Grants.gov, the submission will generate a new date and time-stamp email notification. Only those applications with on-time date and time stamps that result in a validated application, which is transmitted to ACF, will be acknowledged.

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview* and *in Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times.* Paper applications received after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Notification of Application Disqualification
Applications that are disqualified under these criteria are considered to be "non-responsive" and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this funding opportunity announcement.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package
CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd., Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: cb@grantreview.org

Electronic Application Submission:
The electronic application submission package is available in the FOA's listing at www.Grants.gov.

Applications in Paper Format:
For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package available in the FOA's Grants.gov synopsis at www.Grants.gov. They are also available at http:// www.grants.gov/web/ grants/forms/sf-424- family.html. See *Section IV.2.Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if

applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to www.Grants.gov.

Standard Forms that are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d):
Available at the Grants.gov Forms Repository website at http:// www.grants.gov/web/ grants/forms/sf-424- family.html.

Federal Relay Service:
Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service for assistance at 1-800-877-8339 (**TTY** - Text Telephone or **ASCII** - American Standard Code For Information Interchange).

Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING ACF APPLICATIONS
In FY 2013 ACF implemented a new application upload requirement. Each applicant applying electronically via www.grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

AOR is the designated representative of the applicant/recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants. In signing a grant application, this individual agrees that the organization will assume the obligations imposed by applicable Federal statutes and regulations and other terms and conditions of the award, including any assurances, if a grant is awarded.

AOR authorization is part of the registration process at www.Grants.gov where the AOR will create a short profile and obtain a username and password from the Grants.gov Credential Provider. AORs will only be authorized for the DUNS number registered in the System for Awards Management (SAM).

Point of Contact

In addition to the AOR, a point of contact on matters involving the application must also be identified. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR. The point of contact must be available to answer any questions pertaining to the application.

Application Checklist

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials.

Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

Accepted Font Style

Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font.

Page Limitations

Applicants must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:". *Page* **limitation(s) do not include SFs and**

OMB-approved forms.

All applications must be double-spaced and in Times New Roman, 12-point font. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have the last extra pages removed and the removed pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the one-page Project Summary/Abstract, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

Adherence to FOA Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the objective review. The removed page(s) will not be made available to reviewers.

In instances where formatting and font requirements are not adhered to, ACF uses a formula to determine the actual number of pages to be removed. The formula counts the number of characters an applicant uses when following the instructions and using 12-point TNR and compares the resulting number with that of the submitted application. For example, an applicant using TNR, 11-point font, with 1-inch margins all around, and single-spacing, would have an additional 26 lines, or 1500 characters, which is equal to 4/5 of an additional page. Extra pages resulting from this formula will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Applications that have more than one scanned page of a document on a single page will have the page(s) removed from the review.

For applicants that submit paper applications, double-sided pages will be counted as two pages. When the maximum allowed number of pages is reached, excess pages will be removed and will not be made available to reviewers.

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Copies Required

Applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants submitting electronic applications need not provide additional copies of their application package.

Applicants submitting applications in paper format must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures.

Signatures

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at www.Grants.gov.

The original of a paper format application must include original signatures of the authorized representatives.

Accepted Application Format

With the exception of the required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, all application materials must be formatted so that they are 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around.

If possible, applicants are encouraged to include page numbers for each page within the application.

ACF generally does not encourage submission of scanned documents as they tend to have reduced clarity and readability. If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Documents must be scanned page-for-page, meaning that applicants may not scan more than one page of a document onto a single page.

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

The total combined page limit for both files (Project Description and Appendices) is 125 pages.

The Project Description file must include these items in this order:

1. Table of Contents
2. Abstract
3. Objectives and Need for Assistance
4. Approach
5. Evaluation
6. Organizational Capacity
7. Logic Model
8. Line Item Budget and Budget Justification

The Appendices file must include these items in this order:

1. Certifications and Assurances
2. Proof of Legal Status (if applicable)
3. Third-party agreements
4. Staff and Position Data (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
5. Indirect Cost Rate Letter (if applicable)

Do not include Standard Forms or OMB-approved forms as part of the Project Description file or the Appendices file. For electronic applicants, Standard Forms are submitted separately at Grants.gov. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms are not included in the page limitations.

ORGANIZING THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND APPENDICES. The applicant must address all requirements listed in *Section IV.2* in their project description. Reviewers will use the specific evaluation criteria in *Section V.1 Application Review Information* of this FOA to review and evaluate each application. Therefore, applicants must organize their Project Description and Appendices in the sequence used in *Section V.1* so that reviewers can readily find information that directly addresses each of the specific review criteria.

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have requested and received an exemption that will allow submission in paper format. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for information about requesting an exemption*.*

Electronic applications will only be accepted via www.Grants.gov. **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

Each applicant is required to upload ONLY two electronic files, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms.

File One: Must contain the entire Project Description, and the Budget and Budget Justification (including a line-item budget and a budget narrative).

File Two: Must contain all documents required in the Appendices.

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement

No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will be

amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.   **Please do not attach additional documents to the SF-424 at Question 14 and/or after Question 15. Instead of providing a separate response to Question 14, all applicants are required to submit the SF for Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL). In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites. Documents submitted as attachments to the SF-424 will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed.**

Application Upload Requirements

ACF strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs). One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification; the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices. Details on the content of each of the two files, as well as page limitations, are listed later in this section.

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Professional software suite will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

However, ACF understands that all applicants may not have access to this software. Grants.gov offers a listing of several free PDF conversion programs. These programs can be found on Grants.gov by clicking on "Support" at the top menu bar and selecting "Technical Support" . Under the "Technical Support" section select "Recommended Software." A link to "PDF Conversion Software" is available in the left-hand menu box. Free PDF software, available on this page, will allow users to convert and merge their PDF documents. As an example, ACF is providing written instructions for downloading and using one type of free software listed at Grants.gov at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ grants/howto#chapter-7](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-7) under "How to Apply for a Grant/Submit an Application." [ACF does not endorse any of the software listed on Grants.gov, and applicants are not required to use a specific type of PDF conversion software to submit an application.]

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or with SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf under "How to Apply for a Grant/Submit an Application."

Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms

Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, such as the SF-424 application and budget forms and the SF-P/PSL (Project/Performance Site Location), are uploaded separately at Grants.gov. These forms are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files. See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* for the listing of required Standard Forms, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Special characters that are allowed under Grants.gov's naming conventions, and are accommodated by ACF's systems, are listed in the instructions available in the Download Application Package at Grants.gov. Please also see [http://www.grants.gov./ web/grants/support/technical-support/troubleshooting/ restricting-special-characters.html](http://www.grants.gov./web/grants/support/technical-support/troubleshooting/restricting-special-characters.html)

Use only file formats supported by ACF It is critical that applicants submit applications using only the supported file formats listed here. While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two application submission files (Project Description and Appendices) are**

uploaded as PDF documents in order to comply with the two file upload limitation. Documents in file formats that are not supported by ACF will be removed from the application and will not be used in the competitive review. This may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make any awards based on an incomplete application.

ACF supports the following file formats:

- Adobe PDF – Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
- Corel WordPerfect (.wpd)
- Image Formats (.JPG, .GIF, .TIFF, or .BMP only)

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* later in this section under *Application Submission Options* for more information.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single FOA, or multiple applications under separate FOAs, each application submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled for the specific FOA it addresses by FOA title and by Funding Opportunity Number (FON).

Because each application will be duplicated, do not use or include separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, maps, brochures, or any other items that cannot be processed easily on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten in any way separate sections of the application. Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. **All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes.**

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.6. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking grant or cooperative agreement awards under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this funding opportunity at www.grants.gov.

Other versions of required Standard Forms, assurances,and certifications are available at Grants.gov http://www.grants.gov/web/ grants/forms/sf-424- family.html.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description

SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites. As a Standard Form (SF), this form is not included in the application's page limitation.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes	Submission of a certification is required prior to award for grantees receiving more than $5,000,000 in federal funding for the first budget year of a multi-year project; or for grantees receiving more than $5,000,000 in federal funding for a one-year (12 months) project period; or for grantees receiving more than $5,000,000 in federal funding for a multi-year project to be fully funded.	Applicants are advised of the following requirement contained in Section 518 of the "Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014," (Pub.L. 113-76, Division H). This requirement remains in effect: Sec. 518. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract in an amount greater than $5,000,000 or to award a grant in excess of such amount unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, the contractor or

		grantee has filed all Federal tax returns required during the 3 years preceding the certification, has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and has not, more than 90 days prior to certification, been notified of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding. Accordingly, if applicants request more than $5 million in Federal funds for the first budget year of a multi-year project to be funded in FY 2015, or as a multi-year project to be fully funded in FY 2015, the applicant will be required to submit a certification complying with the requirements, prior to receiving an award.
DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	A DUNS number is required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/ webform. Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.	A DUNS number and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants. See *Section III.3. Other* for information on obtaining DUNS number at http://fedgov.dnb.com/ webform and registration at SAM.gov at http ://www.sam.gov.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.

| Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule) | Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. | Form is available at http:// www.hhs .gov/ ohrp/ assurances/ forms/index .html. General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http ://www. hhs.gov/ ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (ohrp @csophs .dhhs.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900). |
| SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance | Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date. | Required for all applications. |

Non-Federal Reviewers
Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information.If applicants are submitting their application electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review and selection process.

The Project Description

Part I: The Project Description Overview

Purpose
The project description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for available assistance. It should address the activity for which federal funds are being requested, and should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the program as described in *Section I. Program Description*. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. When appropriate, applicants should cite the evaluation criteria that are relevant to specific components of their project description.   Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.

General Expectations and Instructions
Applicants should develop project descriptions that focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Extensive exhibits are not required. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting information concerning activities that will not be directly funded by the grant or information that does not directly pertain to an integral part of the grant-funded activity should be placed in an appendix.

Part II: General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description

Introduction

Applicants must prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria*. The text options give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers. The table of contents must be single spaced and will be counted against the total page limitations.

Project Summary/Abstract

Provide a summary of the application's project description. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without reference to other parts of the application. The abstract must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

Please place the following at the top of the abstract:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax)
- E-Mail Address
- Web Site Address, if applicable

The project abstract must be single-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, and limited to one page in length. Additional pages will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Objectives And Need For Assistance

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance including the nature and scope of the problem must be demonstrated, and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly and concisely stated; supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned interests other than the applicant, may be included. Any relevant data based on planning studies should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as well as data describing the needs of the target population and the proposed service area as needed. When appropriate, a literature review should be used to support the objectives and needs described in this section.

Approach

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and/or community involvement in the project. Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals that will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be used to address these challenges.

The applicant must propose an FGDM project that clearly meets the purpose of this FOA in supporting the placement and maintenance of the target population of children and youth in safe, permanent living arrangements with family members, where their well-being needs are met. Applications must address maternal and paternal relatives and fictive kin as potential resources to meet a range of permanency needs, including but not limited to, placement. Applicants must demonstrate how effective engagement of these family members, via the FGDM process, will assist them in building or strengthening relationships with the child or youth, and will empower them to participate fully in planning and decision-making on their behalf.

Through implementation and rigorous evaluation of the project, the plan proposed by the applicant will be designed to yield findings to inform the field about what works and why in FGDM programs, and will help build evidence of effectiveness of FGDM as a child welfare intervention.

Target Population

The applicant must propose a project to test the effectiveness of the FGDM process in helping the target population of children and youth in, or at risk of entering into, foster care achieve and sustain permanency with family members, as described in *Section I. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, A.2. Target Population*. The applicant's plan must clearly identify the specific target population to be addressed and delineate distinct strategies and considerations, including anticipated challenges, that reflect the characteristics and demographics of these children and family members, in order to identify, engage, and serve them effectively in the proposed project.

- Applications must include documentation and discussion of a current assessment of the needs of the target population of children, youth, and family members in the geographic area to be served by the grant project;
- Applications must provide data from state and local child welfare agencies and other sources, as appropriate, to identify the size, characteristics, and service needs of the target population, including anticipated numbers to be served, and to show how those have informed the development of the proposed project;

> Note: If the applicant proposes to target a specific subpopulation of children and families, the application must provide justification for this focus, along with a description of specific needs, challenges, and considerations for the subpopulation, including cultural and social norms that influence family dynamics, family relationships, and family functioning; and

- Applications must provide data based on a current assessment of the target geographic area that will identify and describe existing services to address common needs of the target population and their families, including children's mental health needs and parental substance abuse needs. The application will analyze the availability and accessibility of the needed service array, both formal and informal, to effectively address these needs.

Program Design

- The applicant will clearly describe how it will implement a new FGDM program, or expand, enhance, or further target an existing FGDM program, which meets the requirements under this FOA, for the purposes of serving the target population as required under this FOA. See *Section I. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, A.4. Program Design* for post-award requirements;
- The application will clearly reflect that implementation and evaluation of FGDM represent the sole focus of projects funded under this FOA. The proposed FGDM program must be a distinct and recognizable component of casework practice and may not support any other child welfare intervention. The application must describe how the target population of children and their families may be receiving other types of services from the child welfare agency or its partner agencies;
- The applicant must clearly identify and define the FGDM model on which the proposed project is based, and will fully describe whether and how the model will be modified to incorporate all

elements required under this FOA. Proposed plans must include detailed explanations of program goals and objectives, including timing, participants, and intended outcomes, as well as key features, including training components, with descriptions of training manuals, materials, brochures, and documents;

- The application must provide clear descriptions and explanations of how the proposed project is family-centered, strengths-based, and culturally relevant to the target population; and
- The applicant must document how the proposed FGDM project will address domestic violence issues in a safe manner and facilitate connecting children exposed to domestic violence to appropriate services, including reconnection with the abused parent when appropriate. The applicant must explain how the project will ensure the safety of all participants during the FGDM process, including:

  - How it will determine when domestic violence is present or a potential concern, and what special precautions will be taken prior to meetings;
  - How the project will work closely with survivors and include domestic violence advocates in the planning, preparation, and implementation of the FGDM process;
  - How it will develop and instill procedures for holding FGDM meetings when it may not be appropriate for the survivor and the perpetrator to be present in the same room; and
  - How it will train staff to work with families where domestic violence issues are present, as well as collaborate with domestic violence workers, advocates, and agencies during the FGDM process.

Required Elements

- The applicant must document fully how the proposed FGDM program will include each of the essential elements required under this FOA and must show how these elements will be comprehensively addressed and clearly linked in project plans.
- The applicant must fully describe how these required elements will be used as the foundation of efforts to further develop, articulate, and operationalize the core components of FGDM as part of the evidence building process. The applicant must provide clear explanations of how it will, at the conclusion of the project period, deliver findings related to the core components of their specific FGDM program, along with a rationale for the inclusion and effective implementation of each component.

For more information on Required Elements, see *Section I. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, A.4.a. Required Program Elements for Funded Projects*.

Implementation Plan

Applicants must propose a plan for effective implementation that is well documented and well justified, and that ensures the project will develop and monitor the processes and mechanisms required under this FOA. (See *Section I. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, A.4.b. Implementation Plan for more information*.)

Collaboration

- The applicant must fully document how the proposed project will coordinate with existing agency services and with services of the broad child welfare system, and in addition, will develop or enhance a strong plan of collaboration with and commitment from relevant community organizations, including faith-based organizations, in order to:

  - Offer an array of services that are targeted to meet the needs of the children and their families, and are both available and accessible;
  - Identify space for FGDM meetings in close proximity to where family members reside;
  - Adequately address safety needs when working with families where there is a co-occurrence of domestic violence; and
  - Ensure that the project and collaborating organizations will maintain and respect

confidentiality during the planning, preparation, and implementation of the FGDM process.

- The application must provide clear explanations of how the project will define the roles and responsibilities of all collaborating organizations and will ensure their commitment to carrying these out, throughout the project period, in order to provide the service array to support the FGDM process. The proposed plan must ensure participation of all key service providers, both public and private, including domestic violence programs, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services, and must provide third-party agreements or other assurances that document their understanding and willingness to carry out identified roles and responsibilities in the project. These agreements must specify relevant partner activities related to FGDM referrals, participation in FGDM meetings, and provision of assessments and services specified in the individualized FGDM service plan, as well as partner activities, such as data sharing for the purpose of the local evaluation.

  - If the applicant is not the public child welfare agency, the application must describe how it will establish a strong, meaningful partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s); or
  - The application must document how the detailed roles and responsibilities of the child welfare partner(s) will be clearly defined and understood, and which formalized agreements have been/will be made to ensure that the partner(s) fully understand and are fully committed to the proposed project, and demonstrate a willingness to be fully engaged in the activities that are described in the application; and
  - Applicants must provide clear explanations of plans to develop or strengthen processes to support these collaborations throughout the project period, including creating and maintaining communication channels and decision-making mechanisms to support continued engagement of partners and facilitate identification and response to system-level challenges and barriers related to project goals and objectives.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function, or activity, in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. For example, each project task could be assigned to a row in the first column of a grid. Then, a unit of time could be assigned to each subsequent column, beginning with the first unit (i.e., week, month, quarter) of the project and ending with the last. Shading, arrows, or other markings could be used across the applicable grid boxes or cells, representing units of time, to indicate the approximate duration and/or frequency of each task and its start and end dates within the project period.

When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Funded Activities Evaluation Plan

Applicants must describe the plan for rigorous evaluation of funded activities. The evaluation may be supported by a logic model. The evaluation must assess processes and progress towards the goals and objectives of the project, and whether the project is having the expected effects and impacts. The evaluation plan must specify expected outcomes and any research questions. The plan must discuss how the results of this evaluation will provide greater understanding and improvement of the funded activities. The plan must include a valid and reliable measurement plan and sound methodological design. Details regarding the proposed data collection activities, the participants, and data management, and analyses plans must be described. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles foreseen in implementation of

the planned evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed.

The applicant must propose a well-justified, rigorous evaluation design, which is appropriate to the target population and the FGDM model on which the project is based, and which is realistic and feasible within the 36-month project period.

Experimental Design Only

The purpose of this FOA is to build on the existing evidence on FGDM, which necessitates the conduct of an experimental design in order to establish causality. Experimental designs involving random assignment to treatment and control groups are the preferred method for determining the intervention impacts. Therefore, CB expects applicants to propose an experimental evaluation design.

The design must include a sampling plan that ensures samples sizes sufficient to detect significant effects on key outcomes. The target sample must represent the intended recipients of services. If the applicant intends to conduct analyses of impacts on subgroups of the target population, the subgroups will be identified in advance and the applicant must demonstrate that subgroup sizes are sufficient for the planned analyses.

If a comparison group is proposed rather than a control group, i.e., if the applicant proposes a quasi-experimental design, the applicant must provide a reasonable explanation of why an experimental design is not possible or feasible. The applicant must describe how the comparison group will be composed and on what variables treatment and comparison groups will be matched.

CB expects that applicants will propose well-conceived and convincing research plans that include a contemporaneous control group.

Theory of Change

The applicant must describe the theory of change for its proposed FGDM model that clearly identifies the expected short-term and long-term outcomes of the demonstration project and that explains how and why the proposed FGDM model is expected to address those outcomes.

Logic Model

Please see *Logic Model* later in this section for instructions.

Evaluation Plan

Local evaluation plans must include an implementation study, an impact study, and a cost study. The applicant's proposed evaluation plan must include a detailed description of each of these studies.

The applicant's implementation plan must:

- Capture details about the selected FGDM model;
- Measure the extent to which the model is being practiced with fidelity;
- Describe the population of children and families who receive FGDM;
- Describe the linkages between the collaborative partners that will help ensure that identified needs of children and family members are met; and
- Identify factors that facilitated and hindered the implementation of the model.

The applicant's impact study plan must:

- Test the effectiveness of the FGDM model;
- If applicable, identify specific subgroups of the target population that will be studied and demonstrate that the sample size will be large enough to support such analyses;
- Assess the degree to which behaviors, capacities, connections, and/or well-being of participants change;
  - Assess the impact of FDGM on organizations and systems; and

- Propose and justify indicators and measures of those indicators that will yield the evidence sought by the FOA are technically sound and are feasible to administer.

The applicant's cost study plan must:

- Identify, describe, and analyze the personnel and non-personnel resources that are allocated among cost categories and program activities;
- Identify, describe, and analyze what direct services and what management and administration activities are conducted, and what those services and activities cost;
- Describe how case level and aggregate data will be obtained and tracked (including whether this would require agreements with project partners); and
- Be expected to yield information that can inform decisions about resource allocation.

Research Questions

The applicant must identify the key research questions it expects the evaluation to address, which support the purposes of this FOA. If the applicant identifies additional research questions, those questions should be focused on strengthening existing evidence or establishing new evidence on the implementation of FGDM. At a minimum, the applicant must include in its plan the following research questions:

- Related to the implementation study:

  - What are the essential elements of the FGDM model?
  - Did FGDM facilitators implement the FGDM model with fidelity?
  - How do you successfully engage families to use the FGDM model?
  - What contextual factors impact project implementation?
  - What do children and families think about FGDM?

- Related to the impact study:

  - To what extent does participation in FGDM affect outcome areas of interest, including:

    - Substantiated maltreatment reports and re-reports;
    - Rates of entry and re-entry into out-of-home care;
    - Placement type and stability;
    - Families' capacity to provide for children's needs; and
    - Children's social, emotional, behavioral, health, and educational well-being?

  - To what extent does FGDM improve the number of formal and informal supports for parents, caregivers, and other family members?

    - Does FGDM result in expanded or stronger family connections, including with fathers and paternal relatives?
    - Does FGDM result in increased family stability?
    - To what extent does the FGDM project increase child and family involvement in planning and decision-making?
    - To what extent does participation in FGDM reduce barriers and address needs of children and families?
    - Does the FGDM process result in greater access to individualized services as well as access to an enhanced service array for the target population of children and their families?
    - Is participation in FGDM meetings reflected in the case plans?

- Related to the cost study:

  - What are the total annual costs of operating FGDM?
  - How are both personnel (e.g., salaries, benefits) and non-personnel (e.g., facilities, overhead, contracts) resources allocated among cost categories and program activities?

- How do cost expenditure patterns differ between FGDM activities compared to traditional child welfare activities?

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- The applicant must describe in the evaluation plan how it will obtain IRB approval from all applicable agencies, including defining the process to be followed and a potential timeline; and
- The applicant must identify any anticipated challenges in obtaining IRB approval within the first year of the project, and describe strategies to address these.

Evaluation Findings

The applicant must describe its plan for incorporating ongoing evaluation findings into the operation of the program to improve or enhance its effectiveness.

Cross-Site Evaluation

The applicant must document its willingness and ability to participate fully in the cross-site evaluation effort under this FOA that examines the effectiveness of the awarded grants in achieving positive outcomes for children and families, and making meaningful contributions to the evidence base for FGDM. This includes working with other projects funded under this FOA, CB, and the cross-site evaluator to identify and/or develop common data elements and/or measures to be reported to the cross-site evaluator; to collect and report data; and to disseminate evaluation findings.

Evaluation Capacity

- Applicants must clearly document sufficient capital and human resources that are commensurate with the need to collect high quality data for the purposes of a rigorous evaluation of the impact of FGDM programs. Specifically, applicants are encouraged to allocate between 20 to 25 percent of the budget for evaluation-related activities. The applicant provides a reasonable rationale and justification for its resource allocation to evaluation-related activities. (See *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification* for more information.)
- Applicants must document the staff qualifications and organizational capacity of the local evaluator(s) to implement a rigorous evaluation of a project of this type within the project period, including documentation of experience and expertise related to the following:

  - Understanding of the state and/or local level child welfare and partner agencies that will be working together to support implementation of the grant project. Local evaluators must demonstrate experience conducting systems-level research and an understanding of how to measure systems change;
  - Experience conducting research on program fidelity, implementation, and child and family outcomes, including the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information and data;
  - Experience working closely with program staff to develop and monitor the data needed, plan and carry out evaluation activities, incorporate feedback into the program, and identify and disseminate findings;
  - Expertise in evaluation design and methods. Local evaluators must have experience designing and conducting longitudinal research that is aligned with research questions and a program logic model/theory of change. Other important experiences include selecting measures, using existing data systems as a source of evaluation information, and collecting data that are reliable and valid;
  - Skills in user-friendly, accessible reporting and communication with partners and stakeholders. The local evaluator must be able to communicate with and share information with varied audiences, including program staff, administrators, government agency staff members, and policy makers; and
  - Ability and willingness to collaborate and coordinate with the Family Connection cross-site

evaluation data collection efforts. Local evaluators will work closely with program staff at the local sites to ensure that data needed for the national cross-site evaluation is collected and submitted as required. Local evaluators will serve as a liaison between the grantee and the cross-site evaluation team to ensure timely and accurate data reporting.

Geographic Location

Describe the precise location of the project and boundaries of the area to be served by the proposed project.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.
- A statement from a state taxing body, state attorney general, or other appropriate state official certifying that the applicant organization has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals.
- A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status.
- Any of the items in the subparagraphs immediately above for a state or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate.

Unless directed otherwise, applicants must include proof of non-profit status in the *Appendices* file of the electronic application submission.

Additional Eligibility Documentation

Applicants must provide the additional, required documentation, or required credentials, to support eligibility for an award, as described in *Section III. Eligibility Information* of this announcement:

If the applicant is a private organization, documentation of support from the relevant local or state child welfare agency or a description of how the organization plans to coordinate its services and activities with those offered by the relevant local or state child welfare agency is required. (For more information, see *Section I. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, A.4.c. Collaboration, Expectations of Grantees That Are Not the Public Child Welfare Agency*.)

Logic Model

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their project. A logic model is a one-page diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this announcement the logic model should summarize the connections between the:

- Goals of the project (e.g., objectives, reasons for proposing the interventions, if applicable);
- Assumptions (e.g., beliefs about how the program will work and its supporting resources. Assumptions should be based on research, best practices, and experience);

- Inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, budget);
- Target population (e.g., the individuals to be served);
- Activities (e.g., approach, listing key intervention, if applicable);
- Outputs (i.e., the direct products or deliverables of program activities); and
- Outcomes (i.e., the results of a program, typically describing a change in people or systems).

Project Sustainability Plan

Applicants must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. Grantees are expected to sustain key elements of their grant projects, e.g., strategies or services and interventions, which have been effective in improving practices and those that have led to improved outcomes for children and families.

Describe the approach to project sustainment that will be most effective and feasible. Describe the key individuals and/or organizations whose support will be required in order to sustain program activities. Describe the types of alternative support that will be required to sustain the planned program. If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how their cooperation and/or collaboration will be maintained after the end of federal funding.

Organizational Capacity

Provide the following information on the applicant organization and, if applicable, on any cooperating partners:

- Organizational charts;
- Resumes (no more than two single-spaced pages in length);
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description);
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures;
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

If any confidential or sensitive information will be collected during the course of the project, whether from staff (e.g., background investigations) or project participants and/or project beneficiaries, provide a description of the methods that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and safeguarded. Also provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period.

Dissemination Plan

Applicants must propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or grant project outputs so that project information is provided to key target audiences. Dissemination plans must include:

- Dissemination goals and objectives;
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes;
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Letters of Commitment. General letters of support are **not** considered to be third-party agreements. Third-party agreements must clearly describe the project activities and support to which the third party is committing. Third-party agreements must be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization.

Provide written and signed agreements between grantees and subgrantees, or subcontractors, or other cooperating entities. These agreements must detail the scope of work to be performed, work schedules, remuneration, and other terms and conditions that structure or define the relationship.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C, according to the directions provided with the SFs. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If matching or cost sharing is a requirement, applicants must include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance). See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

Special Note: *The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Pub.L. 113-76), enacted January 17,2014, limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary, or any percentage of salary, to an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the Federal Executive Pay scale is $183,300. Please see* http:// www.opm.gov/ policy-data-oversight/ pay-leave/salaries -wages/ 2015/ executive -senior- level*. This amount reflects an individual's base salary* ***exclusive*** *of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties to the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards/subcontracts under a ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

Provide a budget using the 424A and/or 424C, as applicable, for each year of the proposed project. Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for the first year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

Applicants are encouraged to allocate sufficient funds within the 36-month project period, i.e., between 20 to 25 percent of the total project budget, to support the local, site-specific evaluation of their projects and their participation in the Family Connection cross-site evaluation. Funds for evaluation must appear in the budget, and applicants must state the percentage of the total budget that will be allocated to evaluation. Projects are encouraged to set aside sufficient funds for the costs of assessments and instruments needed for screening and measuring well-being outcomes of families, data collection, and dissemination activities, including staff time related to these activities.

Applicants must allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for the project director, the evaluator, and key partners, including the local or state child welfare agency partner if the grantee is a private organization, to travel to Washington, DC, to attend the Kick-off Meeting for funded grantees to be held within the first 3 months of the project (first year only) and the 3-day Annual Grantees Meeting, usually held in the spring.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the budget and budget justification. When a match or cost share is required, both federal and non-federal resources must be detailed and justified in the budget and budget narrative justification. "Federal resources" refers only to the ACF grant funds for which the applicant is applying. "Non-federal resources" are all other non-ACF federal and non-federal resources. It is suggested that budget amounts and computations be presented in a columnar format: first column, object class categories; second column, federal budget; next column(s), non-federal budget(s); and last column, total budget. The budget justification should be in a narrative form.

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

Justification: Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application. For each staff person provide: the title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent: annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Do not include the costs of consultants, personnel costs of delegate agencies, or of specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Contractors and consultants should not be placed under this category.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, retirement insurance, and taxes.

Travel

Description: Costs of out-of-state or overnight project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. Do not include in-state travel or consultant travel.

Justification: For each trip show the total number of traveler(s); travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used to travel out of town; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key project staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops/conferences/grantee orientations should be detailed in the budget.

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year per unit and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) $5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the applicant organization's regular written accounting practices.)

Justification: For each type of equipment requested applicants must provide a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use of the equipment in the project; as well as a plan for the use, and/or disposal of, the equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy, or section of its policy, that includes the equipment definition.

Supplies

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property other than that included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than $5,000.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

Contractual

Description: Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contracts with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. This area is not for individual consultants.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Recipients and subrecipients, other than states that are required to use 45 CFR Part 92 procedures, must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed by 41 U.S.C. § 134, as amended by 2 CFR Part 200.88, and currently set at $150,000. Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

Note: Whenever the applicant intends to delegate part of the project to another agency, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each contractor/sub-contractor, by agency title, along with the same supporting information referred to in these instructions. If the applicant plans to select the contractors/sub-contractors post-award and a detailed budget is not available at the time of application, the applicant must provide information on the nature of the work to be delegated, the estimated costs, and the process for selecting the delegate agency.

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel; insurance; food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (noncontractual); professional services costs (including audit charges); space and equipment rentals; printing and publication; computer use; training costs, such as tuition and stipends; staff development costs; and administrative costs.

Justification: Provide computations, a narrative description, and a justification for each cost under this category.

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category should be used only when the applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant federal agency.

Justification: An applicant that will charge indirect costs to the grant must enclose a copy of the current rate agreement. If the applicant organization is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, upon notification that an award will be made, it should immediately develop a tentative indirect cost rate proposal based on its most recently completed fiscal year, in accordance with the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposals may also request indirect costs. When an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not be charged as direct costs to the grant. Also, if the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the

authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. The match calculation applies to the total project cost (including match) and not just to the federal share.

Justification: If an applicant is relying on match from a third party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter or other documentation) is required with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Block 18 of the SF-424.

Note: Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching or cost-sharing requirement. Applicants are also required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s) and, for in-kind contributions, a justification of how the stated valuation was determined.

Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 10/31/2015. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via www.Grants.gov

- Additional guidance on the submission of electronic applications can be found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.
- If applicants encounter any technical difficulties in using www.Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at support@grants.gov, to report the problem and obtain assistance. Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Grants.gov Contact Center is closed on federal holidays.
- Applicants should always retain Grants.gov Contact Center service ticket number(s) as they may be needed for future reference.
- **Contact with the Grants.gov Contact Center prior to the listed application due date and time does not ensure acceptance of an application. If difficulties are encountered, the Grants Management Officer listed in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* will determine whether the submission issues are due to Grants.gov system errors or user error.**

Application Validation at www.Grants.gov

After an application has been successfully submitted to www.Grants.gov, it still must pass a series of validation checks. After an application is submitted, Grants.gov generates a submission receipt via email and also sets the application status to "Received." This receipt verifies that the application has been successfully delivered to the Grants.gov system.

Next, Grants.gov verifies the submission is valid by ensuring it does not contain viruses, the opportunity is still open, and the applicant login and applicant DUNS number match. If the submission is valid, Grants.gov generates a submission validation receipt via email and sets the application status to

"Validated."

If the application is not validated, the application status is set to "Rejected." The system sends a rejection email notification to the applicant and the applicant must re-submit the application package. See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

Each time an application is submitted, or resubmitted, via www.Grants.gov, the application will receive a new date and time stamp. Only those applications with on-time date and time stamps that result in a validated application, which are transmitted to ACF, will be acknowledged.

Applicants will be provided with an acknowledgement from Grants.gov that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, a series of checks and validations. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged.

NOTE: The Grants.gov validation check can affect whether the application is accepted for review. If an application fails the Grants.gov validation check and is not resubmitted by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

Similarly, if an applicant resubmits their application to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, and the resubmitted application does not pass the validation check, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

Systems Issues

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF recognizes that some applicants may have limited or no Internet access, and/or limited computer capacity, which may prohibit them from uploading large files at www.Grants.gov. To accommodate such applicants, ACF offers an exemption from required electronic submission. The exemption will allow applicants to submit hard copy, paper applications by hand-delivery, applicant courier, overnight/express mail couriers, or by other representatives of the applicant.

To receive an exemption from required electronic application submission, applicants must submit a written request to ACF that must state that the applicant qualifies for the exemption for one of the two following reasons:

- Lack of Internet access or Internet connection, or
- Limited computer capacity that prevents the uploading of large documents (files) at www.Grants.gov.

Applicants may request and receive the exemption from required electronic application submission by either:

- Submitting an email request to electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov, or
- Sending a written request to the Office of Grants Management Contact listed in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* in this announcement.

Requests for exemption from required electronic application submission will be acknowledged with an approval or disapproval.

Requests that do not state one of the two listed reasons will not be approved.

An exemption is applicable to all applications submitted by the applicant organization during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) in which it is received. Applicants need only request an exemption once in a FFY.

Applicants must request a new exemption from required electronic submission for any succeeding FFY.

Please Note: electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov **may only be used to request an exemption from required electronic submission.** All other inquiries must be directed to the appropriate Agency Contact listed in *Section VII*. of this announcement. Queries or requests submitted to this email address for any reason other than a request for an exemption from electronic application submission will not be acknowledged or answered.

All exemption requests must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Announcement Title,
- Funding Opportunity Number (FON),
- The listed Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number,
- Name of Applicant Organization and DUNS Number,
- AOR name and contact information,
- Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving the application (i.e., the Point of Contact), and
- The reason for which the applicant is requesting an exemption from electronic application submission. The request for exemption must state one of the following two reasons: 1) lack of Internet access or Internet connection; or 2) lack of computer capacity that prevents uploading large documents (files) to the Internet.

Exemption requests must be *received by* ACF no later than two weeks before the application due date, that is, 14 calendar days prior to the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*. If the fourteenth calendar day falls on a weekend or federal holiday, the due date for receipt of an exemption request will move to the next federal business day that follows the weekend or federal holiday.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is now required for the submission of paper applications. See the preceding section on "*Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*"

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.6*. of this announcement for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 p.m, ET, on the due date.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* in this announcement.

IV.3. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications: **04/24/2015**

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* section and in this section. See *Section III.3. Application Disqualification Factors*.

Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via www.Grants.gov is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via www.Grants.gov unless they received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*

ACF does not accommodate transmission of applications by email or facsimile.

Instructions for electronic submission via www.Grants.gov are available at: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period prior to the due date and time that fail the Grants.gov validation check will not be received at ACF. These applications will not be acknowledged.

Mailed Paper Format Applications

The deadline for mailed paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date. Mailed paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, by overnight/express mail couriers, or other representatives of the applicant must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.6. Other Submission Requirements*.

Hand-delivered paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Hand-delivered paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

No appeals will be considered for applications classified as late under the following circumstances:

- Applications submitted electronically via www.Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper format applications received from applicant organizations that were not approved for an exemption from required electronic application submission under the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission* will be disqualified.

Extensions and/or Waiving Due Date and Receipt Time Requirements

ACF may extend an application due date and receipt time when circumstances make it impossible for

applicants to submit their applications on time. These events include natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or when there are widespread disruptions of electrical service, or mail service, or in other rare cases. The determination to extend or waive due date and/or receipt time requirements rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* .

Acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to www.Grants.gov. This email will provide a **Grants.gov Tracking Number**. Applicants should refer to this tracking number in all communication with Grants.gov. The email will also provide a **date and time stamp**, which serves as the official record of application's submission**.** Receipt of this email does not indicate that the application is accepted or that is has passed the validation check.

Applicants will be provided with an acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, a series of checks and validations. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged.

See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

Applicants will be sent additional email(s) from ACF acknowledging that the application has been retrieved from www.Grants.gov by ACF. Receipt of these emails is not an indication that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application

ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.4. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs

This program is covered under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," and 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." Under the Executive Order, States may design their own processes for reviewing and commenting on proposed Federal assistance under covered programs.

Applicants should go to the following URL for the official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in E.O. 12372 http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/.
Applicants from participating jurisdictions should contact their SPOC, as soon as possible, to alert them of their prospective applications and to receive instructions on their jurisdiction's procedures. Applicants must submit all required application materials to the SPOC and indicate the date of submission on the Standard Form (SF) 424 at item 19.

Under 45 CFR 100.8(a)(2), a SPOC has 60 days from the application due date to comment on proposed new awards.

SPOC comments may be submitted directly to ACF to: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, Division of Discretionary Grants, 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW., 6th Floor East, Washington, DC 20447.

Entities that meet the eligibility requirements of this announcement are still eligible to apply for a grant even if a State, Territory or Commonwealth, etc., does not have a SPOC or has chosen not to participate in

the process. Applicants from non-participating jurisdictions need take no action with regard to E.O. 12372. Applications from Federally-recognized Indian Tribal governments are not subject to E.O. 12372.

IV.5. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions, are considered unallowable costs under grants or cooperative agreements awarded under this funding opportunity announcement.

Note: Costs incurred for grant application preparation are not considered allowable costs under an award and may not be included in the project budget or budget justification.

Grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant award.

Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant award.

IV.6. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*

Submission By Mail

CB Operations Center

c/o LCG, Inc.

1400 Key Blvd., Suite 900

Arlington, VA 22209

Hand Delivery

CB Operations Center

c/o LCG, Inc.

1400 Key Blvd., Suite 900

Arlington, VA 22209

Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via http://www.Grants.gov.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.3.* Submission Dates and Times.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: Reviewers will not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Though an application may include web links, or embedded hyperlinks, reviewers will not review this information as it is not considered to be part of the application documents. Nor will the information on websites be taken into consideration in scoring of evaluation criteria presented in this section. Reviewers will evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and **will not** refer to, or access, external links during the objective review.

Objectives and Need for Assistance   **Maximum Points: 15**

In reviewing the objectives and need for assistance, reviewers will consider the extent to which the application strongly addresses:

- FGDM Practice (0-5 points)

  - The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of key issues related to FGDM and the importance of effective implementation of the FGDM process for the target population; and
  - The applicant's proposed plan identifies and describes goals and objectives of the project that meet the intent and requirements of this FOA to support family connections and engage family members in ways that achieve positive outcomes for the target population of children and their families.

- Target Population (0-5 points)

  - The applicant identifies and justifies a target population/subpopulation that meets the requirements of this FOA and is based on strong documentation from analysis of a current assessment of the geographic area to be served;
  - The applicant's proposed plan reflects an understanding of the characteristics and demographics of the target population and anticipated challenges in conducting FGDM effectively with this population; and
  - The applicant provides convincing data, based on a current assessment of the target geographic area, which clearly identifies and describes common needs of the target population and their families in areas related to safety, permanency and well-being; identifies existing services to address these needs; and analyzes the availability and accessibility of the needed service array.

- FGDM Evidence Building (0-5 points)

  - The applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of and need for further research on FGDM, the intent of projects funded under this FOA to contribute to the evidence base for FGDM, and the importance of this in a child welfare context; and
  - The applicant sets forth a sound context and rationale for the project to build evidence for FGDM, particularly with regard to the essential program elements required under this FOA, in order to achieve improved outcomes for the target population and inform the child welfare field.

Approach   **Maximum Points: 30**

In reviewing the approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which the application strongly addresses:

- Program Design (0-12 points)

  - The applicant provides a detailed logic model that clearly operationalizes the project's stated theory of change and illustrates the linkages between project activities/services, outputs, and expected outcomes;
  - The applicant demonstrates that the proposed program of FGDM is conducted as a distinct and recognizable component of casework practice, and is family-centered, strengths-based, and culturally relevant to the target population;
  - The applicant identifies and defines the FGDM model on which the proposed project is based and describes whether and how the model will be modified to incorporate all

essential elements required under this FOA;

- The applicant demonstrates how the proposed project will use the required elements to further develop, articulate, and operationalize the core components of FGDM as part of the evidence building process, and, at the conclusion of the project, deliver findings related to these elements, along with a rationale for the inclusion and effective implementation of each component;
- The applicant provides a reasonable, detailed timeline for implementing the proposed project as required under this FOA; and
- The applicant documents how the proposed FGDM project will address domestic violence issues in a safe manner and ensure the safety of all participants during the FGDM process.

- Project Implementation (0-8 points)

  - The applicant documents and describes how the proposed project will be fully implemented within the first year of grant funding and will ensure that:

    - The FGDM program is implemented as a process and way of practice rather than disconnected meetings;
    - Children, youth, and family members will be effectively engaged in FGDM meetings; and
    - FGDM meetings will identify formal and informal services and resources, based on the needs of the children and their family members; develop individualized/family service plans, which are family-centered, strengths-based, and culturally relevant, to address these needs; and assist children and family members to access needed services and supports; and

  - The applicant demonstrates how the proposed project will identify and address systemic implementation challenges, including determination of criteria for referring a case to FGDM and development of necessary supports addressing training and workload issues for participating agency staff.

- Collaboration (0-6 points)

  - The applicant demonstrates how the proposed project will (a) coordinate with existing agency services, key services of the broad child welfare system, and relevant community organizations to support project goals and objectives and (b) develop or strengthen processes to support these collaborations throughout the project period;
  - The applicant provides clear explanations of roles and responsibilities of all key partners and collaborating organizations, and documents how it will ensure full participation of these throughout the project period;
  - If the applicant is not the public child welfare agency, the applicant describes how it will establish and nurture a strong, meaningful partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s) or documents the commitment of the child welfare agency to perform specific roles and responsibilities on the project.
  - Note: No points shall be earned for this item, i.e., 0 out of 6 potential points, **if the applicant is not the public child welfare agency AND** the application fails to (a) describe how it will establish and nurture a strong, meaningful partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) or (b) provide documentation of support from a relevant local or state child welfare agency, as required under this FOA. (See *Section IV.2. The Project Description. Additional Eligibility Documentation* for more information.)

- Dissemination (0-2 points)

  - The applicant describes how information and knowledge generated by the project will be shared through an effective, strategic dissemination plan;

- The applicant proposes a plan of dissemination activities for key target audiences, for specific, identified purposes, including clear justification of effective dissemination mechanisms to share project findings in timely, customized, and culturally relevant ways. The applicant demonstrates how the project will evaluate the extent to which the dissemination was effective; and
- The applicant documents commitment of the project to work with the other projects in this grant cluster to develop and disseminate cross-cluster products and findings.

- Sustainability Planning (0-2 points)

  - The applicant proposes a well-developed, preliminary sustainability plan to sustain (and expand, if applicable) effective FGDM practice at the conclusion of federal funding. The applicant documents and justifies:

    - The process by which effective FGDM program activities to be sustained will be identified and when these decisions will be made;
    - (If applicable) the plans to expand effective FGDM program activities into other jurisdictions (e.g., to other counties and/or statewide);
    - Identification of key individuals, roles, and/or organizations whose support will be required in order to sustain effective program activities; and
    - How cooperation and/or collaboration of key project partners will be secured and maintained during the project and after the end of federal funding.

Evaluation	Maximum Points: 40

In reviewing the evaluation plan, reviewers will consider the extent to which the plan addresses requirements under this FOA for:

- Rigor of Impact Evaluation Design (0-20 points)

  - The applicant proposes a rigorous impact evaluation design that is likely to build the evidence for FGDM as an effective child welfare practice. The applicant proposes a plan for random assignment to treatment and control groups in order to determine the impact of the project activities on identified outcomes. If a comparison group is proposed rather than a control group, i.e., if the applicant proposes a quasi-experimental design, the applicant provides a reasonable explanation of why an experimental design is not possible or feasible and the applicant adequately describes how the comparison group will be composed and on what variables treatment and comparison groups will be matched; and
  - The applicant presents a sampling plan that ensures samples sizes sufficient to detect significant effects on key outcomes. The target sample represents the intended recipients of services. If the applicant intends to conduct analyses of impacts on subgroups of the target population, the subgroups are identified in advance and the applicant demonstrates that subgroup sizes are sufficient for the planned analyses.

- Overall Evaluation Design (0-10 points)

  - The applicant's evaluation plan is strongly guided by the project's logic model and addresses the research questions outlined in the FOA related to the required implementation study, impact study, and cost study. Any additional research questions identified by the applicant align with the intent of the FOA. The methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and context of the project under this FOA;
  - The applicant proposes a comprehensive implementation evaluation design that is likely to result in the development of formal intervention guidelines and fidelity criteria for the

FGDM model and describes implementation measures that will result in a description of:

- Recipients of FGDM (e.g., child/family demographics, child/family characteristics);
- Key outputs of interest from the FGDM model (e.g., number and type of meetings, number and type of participants);
- Child/family and staff perceptions of FGDM; and
- Description of and fidelity to the FGDM model, including the essential program elements required under this FOA.

- The applicant proposes a reasonable impact evaluation design that:

- Tests the effectiveness of the FGDM model for the target population, as well as the impact of FDGM on organizations and systems;
- Identifies and justifies indicators and measures of those indicators that are consistent with the focus and goals of the FGDM program under this FOA; and
- Addresses the key impact evaluation questions under this FOA related to child/family level outcomes and organization and systems level outcomes.

- The applicant proposes a reasonable cost evaluation design that:

- Allows for analyses of personnel and non-personnel resources among cost categories and program activities;
- Allows for analyses of direct services, and management and administration activities;
- Includes both case level and aggregate data that can reasonably be obtained and tracked; and
- Identifies anticipated challenges and potential strategies to address these.

- The evaluation measures proposed are objective and have strong reliability, validity, and internal consistency;
- There is a sound plan for securing informed consent and implementing an IRB review, if applicable, within timeframes that would permit full implementation within Year One and sufficient data collection within the project period to detect impacts; and
- The application provides an appropriate, feasible, and realistic plan for using evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results. The evaluation plan includes performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress that can be used to modify the program, as necessary, and serve as a basis for program adjustments.

- Evaluation Capacity (0-10 points)

- Third-party evaluator:

- The applicant presents a sound plan for contracting with an external, third-party evaluator and demonstrates that the proposed evaluator has the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity;
- The applicant demonstrates that the proposed evaluator has sufficient experience conducting research and/or evaluation with the target population(s) in collaboration with relevant child welfare program staff, partner agencies, and stakeholders,
- The proposed evaluator possesses the staff qualifications and necessary organizational capacity to:

- Conduct a local evaluation that has a longitudinal research design at the required level of rigor and is composed of implementation, impact, and cost studies; and
- Collaborate on the cross-site evaluation as required in this FOA

- Data collection:

- The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the level of effort required to collect and report implementation, impact, and cost data, and the capacity to fully participate in the cross-site evaluation; and
- If applicable, letters of commitment from project partners to provide data relevant to the cost evaluation are provided.

Organizational Capacity	Maximum Points: 10

In reviewing the organizational capacity, reviewers will consider the extent to which the application strongly addresses:

- Experience and Expertise (0-5 points)

  - The applicant's organization and any partnering organizations collectively have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and rigorous evaluation of FGDM programs. Each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) possesses the organizational capability to fulfill its assigned roles and functions effectively;
  - The proposed project director and key project staff demonstrate sufficient relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities (e.g., resume) to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity. The role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors, and/or partners, is clearly defined (e.g., job description) and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project.

- Management Plan (0-5 points)

  - The applicant demonstrates that there is a sound management plan for achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality. The plan clearly defines:

    - Roles and responsibilities of the lead agency;
    - Processes for effective management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants (if applicable).

Budget and Budget Justification	Maximum Points: 5

In reviewing the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- There is a detailed narrative budget justification for the first year of the project. The costs of the proposed project are reasonable, in view of the activities to be conducted and expected results and benefits;
- The applicant has allocated sufficient resources to support the conduct of a rigorous local evaluation and participation in a cross-site evaluation, as described in this FOA; and
- There is evidence that the applicant's fiscal controls and accounting procedures would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds received under this funding opportunity announcement.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this announcement on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant or sub-recipient that does not have a DUNS number (www.dbn.com) and an active registration at SAM (www.sam.gov). See *Section III.3. Other*.

Initial ACF Screening

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets any of the disqualification factors described in *Section III.3.Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Disqualified applications are considered to be "non-responsive" and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this funding opportunity announcement.

Objective Review and Results

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this announcement. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested. ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. ACF will also consider the geographic distribution of federal funds in its award decisions.

Please refer to *Section IV.2.* of this announcement for information on non-federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval that were not funded under the competition because of the lack of available funds may be held over by ACF and reconsidered in a subsequent review cycle if a future competition under the program area is planned. These applications will be held over for a period of up to one year and will be re-competed for funding with all other competing applications in the next available review cycle. For those applications that have been deemed as approved but unfunded, notice will be given of such determination by postal mail.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Applications will be reviewed during the Summer 2015. Grant awards will have a start date no later than September 29, 2015.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1. Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Notice of Award (NoA) that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via postal mail, email, or by GrantSolutions.gov or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk and may be reimbursed only to the extent that they are considered allowable as approved pre-award costs. Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.5. Funding Restrictions*.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to 45 CFR Part 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at http://www.gpo.gov.

An application funded with the release of federal funds through a grant award does not constitute, or imply, compliance with federal regulations. Funded organizations are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations.

Prohibition Against Profit

Grantees are subject to the limitations set forth in 45 CFR § 75.215, Special provisions for awards to commercial organizations as recipients (45 CFR § 75.215(b)_Prohibition against profit.), which states that, "...no HHS funds may be paid as profit to any recipient even if the recipient is a commercial organization. Profit is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs."

Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations

Grantees are also subject to the requirements of 45 CFR § 87.1(c), Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which says, "Organizations that receive direct financial assistance from the [Health and Human Services] Department under any Department program may not engage in inherently religious activities such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the Department." Therefore, organizations must take steps to completely separate the presentation of any program with religious content from the presentation of the Federally funded program by time or location *in such a way that it is clear that the two programs are separate and distinct.* If separating the two programs by time but presenting them in the same location, one program must *completely* end before the other program begins.

A faith-based organization receiving HHS funds retains its independence from federal, state, and local governments, and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs. For example, a faith-based organization may use space in its facilities to provide secular programs or services funded with federal funds without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols. In addition, a faith-based organization that receives federal funds retains its authority over its internal governance, and it may retain religious terms in its organization's name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents in accordance with all program requirements, statutes, and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of HHS-funded activities.

Regulations pertaining to the Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which includes the prohibition against federal funding of inherently religious activities, Understanding the Regulations Related to the Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Initiative" are available at http://www.hh s.gov/ partner ships /about/r egulations/. Additional information, resources, and tools for faith-based organizations is available through The Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships website at http://www.hhs.gov/ partnerships/ index.html and at the https://www.acf.hhs.gov /progra ms/ocs /resource/capacity- building- toolkits-for- faith-based-and -community- organizations.

Award Term and Condition under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to the requirements of Section 106 (g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. § 7104). For the full text of the award term, go to http://www.acf.hhs.gov / grants/ award-term- and- condition -for-trafficking- in-persons. If you are unable to access this link, please contact the Grants Management Contact identified in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* of this announcement to obtain a copy of the term.

Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. §§ 8101-8106) requires that all organizations receiving grants from any federal agency agree to maintain a drug-free workplace. By signing the application, the Authorizing Official agrees that the grantee will provide a drug-free workplace and will comply with the requirement to notify ACF if an employee is convicted of violating a criminal drug statute. Failure to comply with these requirements may be cause for debarment. Government-wide requirements for Drug-Free Workplace for Financial Assistance are found in 2 CFR Part 182; HHS implementing regulations are set forth in 2 CFR § 382.400. All recipients of ACF grant funds must comply with the requirements in Subpart B - Requirements for Recipients Other Than Individuals, 2 CFR § 382.225. The rule is available at http://www.gpo.gov /fdsys /pkg/ CFR-2001-title45-vol1/content-detail.html.

Debarment and Suspension

HHS regulations published in 2 CFR Part 376 implement the governmentwide debarment and suspension system guidance (2 CFR Part 180) for HHS' non-procurement programs and activities. "Non-procurement transactions" include, among other things, grants, cooperative agreements, scholarships, fellowships, and loans. ACF implements the HHS Debarment and Suspension regulations as a term and condition of award. Grantees may decide the method and frequency by which this determination is made and may check the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) located at https://www.s am.gov/, although checking the EPLS is not required. More information is available at https://w ww.acf.hhs.gov/ grants-forms.

Pro-Children Act

The Pro-Children Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. §§ 7181 through 7184, imposes restrictions on smoking in facilities where federally funded children's services are provided. HHS grants are subject to these requirements only if they meet the Act's specified coverage. The Act specifies that smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children under the age of 18. In addition, smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility or portion of a facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of federally funded health care, day care, or early childhood development, including Head Start services to children under the age of 18. The statutory prohibition also applies if such facilities are constructed, operated, or maintained with federal funds. The statute does not

apply to children's services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment, or facilities where WIC coupons are redeemed. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to $1,000 per violation and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. Appendices to the HHS GPS include a glossary of terms and a list of standard abbreviations for ease of reference. The general terms and conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the Notice of Award (NOA). The HHS GPS is available at https://www.acf.hhs.go v/ grants/ discretionary-competitive-grants.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Applications funded by federal grant programs are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552. Such applications are frequently requested under the FOIA, consistent with the FOIA's requirement to proactively disclose frequently requested materials at 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D). Each released application will receive appropriate redaction of specific information to protect personal privacy and competitively sensitive commercial information. Information on filing a FOIA request is available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/submit-a-foia-request.

Award Term and Condition under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Recipients of federal financial assistance must not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, and in some cases sex and religion. The HHS Office for Civil Rights provides guidance to grantees in complying with civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination. www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/understanding/index.html.

HHS provides guidance to recipients of federal financial assistance on meeting the legal obligation to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to persons with limited English proficiency. www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/laws/revisedlep.html. Recipients must ensure their contractors and sub-recipients also comply with federal civil rights laws.

Other Administrative and National Policy Requirements

CB reserves the right to secure and distribute grantee products and materials, including copies of journal articles written by grantees about their grant projects.

VI.3. Reporting

Grantees under this funding opportunity announcement will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. The frequency of required reporting is listed later in this section.

Performance Progress Reports (PPR)

Notice of Award (NoA) documents will inform grantees of the appropriate performance progress report form or format to use. Grantees should consult their Notice of Award documents to determine the

appropriate performance progress report format required under their award. Performance progress reports are due 30 days after the end of the reporting period. Final program performance reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

For awards that implement the use of the ACF-OGM-SF-PPR, the form is available under "Reporting, Disclosures, and other Standard Forms" at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ grants-forms

Federal Financial Reports (FFR)

ACF grantees are required to use the SF-425 Federal Financial Report (FFR) for expenditure reporting. SF-425 reports will be due as frequently as is required in the terms and conditions of their award using due dates from reports to PMS. The SF-269 is no longer accepted for expenditure reports. If an SF-269 is submitted, the ACF will return it and require the recipient to complete the SF-425.

All expenditure reports will be due on one of the standard due dates by which cash reporting is required to be submitted to PMS or at the end of a calendar quarter as determined by ACF. As a result, a recipient that receives awards from more than one federal program may be subject to more than one approach, but will not be required to change its current means of submission or be subjected to more than eight standard due dates. **A final cumulative SF-425 is due 90 days after the close of the project period.**

For budget periods ending in the months of:	The FFR (SF425) is due to ACF on:
January 01 - March 31	April 30
April 01 - June 30	July 30
July 01 - September 30	October 30
October 01 - December 31	January 30

The SF-425 form in Adobe PDF and MS-Excel formats, along with instructions, is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/ grants_forms.

For planning purposes, ACF reporting periods for awards made under this announcement are as follows:

Performance Progress Reports:	Semi-Annually
Financial Reports:	Semi-Annually

Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Subaward and Executive Compensation

Awards issued as a result of this funding opportunity may be subject to the Transparency Act subaward and executive compensation reporting requirements of 2 CFR Part 170. See ACF's Award Term for Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting Requirement implementing this requirement and additional award applicability information at https:// www.acf.hhs.gov/ grants/ discretionary-competitive-grants.

Tangible Property Report (SF-428)

All ACF grantees are required to submit the Tangible Personal Property Form (SF-428). The SF-428 is a standard form used to collect information related to tangible personal property: equipment with a unit cost of $5,000 or more, and residual supplies with an aggregate fair market value exceeding $5,000. The form consists of the cover sheet and three attachments to be used as required by the terms and conditions of the award: Annual Report; Final Report and a Disposition Request. A Supplemental Sheet, SF-428S, may be used to provide detailed individual item information. The form

is available at http:// www.whitehouse.gov/ omb/ grants_forms.

Real Property Status Report (SF-429)

All ACF grantees are required to submit the Real Property Status Report SF-429, if applicable. The SF-429 is a standard report to be used by recipients of federal financial assistance to report real property status or to request agency instructions on real property that is provided as Government Furnished Property (GFP) or acquired (i.e., purchased, constructed, or renovated) in whole or in part under a Notice of Award. This form consists of the cover sheet and three attachments to be used as frequently as required in the terms and conditions of the award: General reporting (SF-429A, Attachment A), Request to Acquire, Improve or Furnish (SF-429B, Attachment B), or Disposition or Encumberance Request (SF-429C, Attachment C). The forms are available at http:// www.whitehouse.gov/ omb/ grants_forms.

VII. Agency Contacts

Program Office Contact

Cathy Overbagh
Children's Bureau
CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd., Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Office of Grants Management Contact

Daphne Weeden
Grants Management Officer
Division of Discretionary Grants
Children's Bureau Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd., Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Federal Relay Service:
Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service for assistance at 1-800-877-8339 (**TTY** - Text Telephone or **ASCII** - American Standard Code For Information Interchange).

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) http://www.hhs.gov/.

HHS Grants Forecast http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ hhsgrantsforecast/index.cfm.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) http://www.acf.hhs.gov/.

ACF Grants Homepage https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ grants.

ACF Funding Opportunities http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/.

ACF "How to Apply for a Grant" https://www.acf. hhs.gov/ grants/ how-to-apply-for-grants.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) https://www.cfda.gov/.

For submission of a paper format application, all required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Grants-Forms page at https://www. acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms.

Standard grant forms are available at the Grants.gov Forms Repository webpage at http:// www.grants.gov/web/ grants/forms/sf-424- family.html.

For information regarding accessibility issues, visit the Grants.gov Accessibility Compliance Page at http://www07.grants.gov/ web/ grants/ support/ technical-support/ accessibility-compliance.html.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/.

The *Federal Register* https://www.federalregister.gov/.

United States Code (U.S.C.) http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/.

Application Checklist

Applicants may use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* of the announcement. The Certification may be found in the application instructions that are available with the downloaded electronic application package at Grants.gov.	If applicable to the applicant, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.

| SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs

and

SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs | Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.*

For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."

Also available at http://www.grants.gov/ web/ grants/ forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."

These forms are *required* for applications under this FOA:

- Projects that include only non-construction activities must submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL. | Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times.* |
| Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form) | Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.*

For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov page under the "Application Package" tab in the section entitled, "Mandatory."

Available at http://www. grants .gov/ web/ grants/ forms. html by using the link to "SF-424 Family." | Submission is due with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. |

SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory." Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/ grants/ forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times.* **Do not attach required application elements or additional pages to the SF-424 at Questions 14 or 15!** *See Section IV.2. Formatting ACF Applications.*
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*. Additional information and necessary forms are available at http://www.hhs.gov/ ohrp/ assurances/ forms/ index.html. For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional." The form is also available at http:// www. grants. gov/ web/ grants /forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times.*

	Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory." Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/ grants/ forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."	
DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in *Section III.3. Other* in the announcement. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. To register at SAM, go to http ://www.sam.gov.	A DUNS number and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity*.	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the due date listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification* of the announcement.	Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A or SF-424C. It must be submitted with the application package by the due date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.
The Project Description	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.
Table of Contents	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submit with the application by the due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.* The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional." The form is available in the electronic application kit at Grants.gov and at http://www.grants.gov/ web / grants/ forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family." If applicable, submission of this form is required if any funds have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing, or attempting to influence, an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.

	employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.	
Project Sustainability Plan	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.
Third-Party Agreements (also, MOUs and Consortia Agreements)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Project Description*.	If available, submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3*. If not available at the time of application submission, due by the time of award.
Logic Model	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submission is due with the application package by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.